AN ENQUIRY INTO THE POTENTIAL OF A CO-OPERATIVE APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

A Stakeholder Perspective

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism and rural development are much examined research areas. Within these, the importance of community-centric approaches is becoming more and more recognised; however, specific research upon which community-centric development strategies could be built seems to be lacking. This thesis addresses this research gap with the aim to explore the nature of co-operative tourism and its potential towards sustainable rural tourism development in India from a stakeholder perspective.

A literature review demonstrated the benefits of co-operatives as a sustainable business model, particularly for poor communities of developing countries; however, a clear gap emerged with regard to investigating tourism and co-operatives in the same context. This research contributes to filling this gap in knowledge and outlines the clear theoretical benefits of adopting a co-operative business model as a community-centric approach to tourism in the context of rural India, while also pointing out considerable challenges in its practical implementation, such as possible limitations to the ability for self-help.

Fifty qualitative semi-structured interviews were carried out with stakeholders of a co-operative tourism project in two states of India: Uttarakhand and West Bengal. Twenty-six of these were conducted with farmers who are members of the tourism co-operatives presented in this study, ten with members of the wider community in which the project took place and fourteen with tourism professional and academics local to the areas. Focus was put on in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, implying qualitative methods and a phenomenological research approach.

The findings revealed a clear theoretical advantage of a co-operative approach to tourism development, which has potential to address and alleviate many of the challenges associated with tourism and host communities, and which is intensified in poor peripheral areas. However, there are significant practical challenges, which need to be addressed in order for this comparative advantage to translate into practice. These challenges are manifested in a sense of dormancy in the participants, a lack of skills and significant language difficulties. A limit to the principle of self-help, which is inherent to co-operative activities, was identified as creating effective marketing links and hence, requiring ongoing external support.

This research study makes an interdisciplinary contribution to the literature on sustainable tourism, rural development and co-operative studies. In addition, it provides a starting point for further empirical research on the co-operative business model as an approach, which has not yet been sufficiently conceptualised for tourism. Furthermore, it contributes to the wider debate on sustainable rural development through tourism. Future research could usefully investigate how the challenges identified in this study, such as limitations to the principle of self-help, lack of initiative in participants and creating marketing linkages could be addressed.

Keywords: co-operatives, sustainable tourism, rural development, community-centric tourism

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Abbreviations

CBT	Community Based Tourism
cDMO	co-operative Destination Management Organisation
ESCAP	The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GoI	Government of India
IAC	Indian Agritourism Council
ICA	International Co-operative Alliance
IDF	Scottish Government International Development Fund
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoT	Ministry of Tourism
NCUI	National Cooperative Union of India
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
OCDC	Overseas Cooperative Development Council
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PPT	Pro-Poor Tourism
QMU	Queen Margaret University
TICA	International Association of Tourism Co-operatives
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WTO	World Tourism Organisation (see UNWTO)
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

The research put forward in this thesis is an investigative study into the potential of a co-operative approach to sustainable rural tourism development in India. This was made possible through the critical examination of three key topics: sustainable tourism development; rural development; and the co-operative business model. These formed the theoretical framework of this research. Theory suggests that there is potential in a co-operative tourism approach; however, a distinct lack of academic research called for an organised and in-depth empirical exploration of the topic. This was achieved through qualitative data collection in four districts of India. The findings propose that co-operatives can be an effective tool for sustainable rural development which may have comparative advantage over alternative business models or development approaches, particularly in a developing country context. At the same time, problems with its practical implementation emerged, such as limitations to the principle of self-help, a lack of initiative in participants and creating marketing linkages. How the researcher reached this conclusion, and the importance of further research in this domain, will be clarified below.

1.1 Background of the Research Problem

We live in a truly global community. The world economy is, as evidenced by the recent economic crises, a global system. For instance, whereas many developing economies were still experiencing substantial growth while developed economies were hit harder in a more direct sense by the economic downturn, this has had an immediate impact on trade and lending, put extensive pressure on aid budgets and continues to do so (Te Velde 2008; UN 2012a). Equally, environmental issues are not bound to national borders, with climate change being a global threat that poses serious challenges to all of humanity. In either context, sustainable development has increasingly become a topic of debate during the last few decades for

researchers, policy makers and industry. Therefore, including the 1.22 billion people who live below the poverty line of $1.25 a day, mostly in rural areas of developing countries (World Bank 2014a) must form an integral part of the discourse. In this regard, India is no exception. Rural areas in India are in desperate need for employment creation and diversifying agricultural activities in order to combat the major threat of migration away from the villages and into the cities.

This research aims to contribute to the debate on how these rural areas can be included in development strategies. Tourism can be a powerful development tool in this regard, which has received extensive attention in academia for decades (inter alia Holland, Burian and Dixey 2003; Sharpley 2003;Wickens 2004; Ibrahim and Girgis 2008; Kayat 2008; Koutra 2010; UNWTO 2011; Hall, Roberts and Mitchell 2012). At the same time, the sensitive nature of an industry prone to imposing a variety of serious risks and negative impacts upon host communities has to be taken into account. This has also been given much consideration in academic literature and in this context the importance of community-centric approaches to minimise these has more and more strongly emerged (inter alia Webber and Ison 1995; Taylor 1995; Marion 1996; Timothy 1998; Shah and Gupta 2000; Telfer 2000; Tosun 2000; Richards and Hall 2002; Blackman et al. 2004; Blackstock 2005; Mbaiwa 2005; Byrd 2007; Kayat 2008; Okazaki 2008; Singh et al. 2009; Garvare and Johansson 2010; Koutra 2010; Torri 2010; Majee and Hoyt 2011; Stone and Stone 2011; Wilson et al. 2012). An approach is hence put forward which shows promise in offering solutions to many of the problems faced by rural communities while minimising some of the negative impacts of tourism developments; the co-operative.

The co-operative's business model of mutual support and self-help appears to have real potential to alleviate many of the problems faced by rural communities (inter alia Stettner 1965; Birchall 2004; ILO 2004; Gorman 2005; Aref and Sarjit 2009; Birchall and Simmons 2009; Chakrabarty and Gosh 2009; Green and

Marcone 2010; IFAD 2010; Mehta 2010; Majee and Hoyt 2011). However, whilst extensively discussed within development strategies, co-operatives are largely absent from the debate in a tourism context. This thesis offers a starting point in this regard by looking at co-operatives and tourism under one umbrella. One of the major barriers for rural communities in developing countries is the lack of access to markets in which they could operate. Here, tourism has potential to create a market, which is easy to set up, requires minimal resources, is low in intial investment and therefore low in risk, and within which a co-operative can operate. The co-operative in turn provides a sustainable business structure, which, by its very nature can minimise some of the risks associated with tourism development, and which can have implications beyond its immediate business venture, such as access to government support or stronger bargaining power.

To date, however, research on co-operative tourism as a concept, or tourism co-operatives in practice, is scarce. This thesis intends to contribute to filling this gap with the following aim:

Aim

To explore the nature of co-operative tourism and its potential towards sustainable rural tourism development in India from a stakeholder perspective

A phenomenological research approach was adopted (see Chapter 3 for a more extensive discussion on Aim and Objectives).

1.2 Research Framework

This study was not able to build on relevant existing frameworks looking at co-operatives and tourism development as one concept. Both are, however widely researched themes from a broad variety of perspectives. Clarifying the boundaries

of this study is therefore of particular importance in order to focus the research and making the researcher's adopted position explicit.

1.2.1 Sustainable Tourism Development and Developing Countries

The concept of sustainable development stems from the recognition that the world's resources are finite and that human activity has to be conducted in a sustainable manner in order to protect these resources for future generations. According to a commonly adopted definition it encompasses "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987, p. 43). It embraces three main components: The environment, the economy and society (WCED 1987).

When applied to a business context it may seem obvious that business has to be economically sustainable in order to survive in the long-term. But in addition, business has been put under increasing pressure to consider sustainability in its role as a global citizen and how its actions impact upon wider society and the environment (Coles and Hall 2008; UN 2008; Koutra 2010; Holloway and Humphreys 2012). The concept of sustainable development can be argued to be of particular importance to the tourism industry when considering Gunn and Var (2002, p.21), who argue that no other form of development "has so many far-reaching tentacles as does tourism", which can have significant impact on the economic, environmental and socio-cultural situation in a destination (Swarbooke 1999; Malley 2002).

Being one of the biggest industries in the world, with direct and indirect contributions of US$6.3 trillion to the global GDP and generating 255 million jobs (WTTC 2012), tourism is recognised as an effective tool for developing urban and rural economies (inter alia Swarbooke 1999; ESCAP 2001; Shah and Gupta 2000; Sharpley 2003; Hall et al. 2005; Murphy and Price 2005; UNEP and WTO 2005; Bramwell and Lane 2009; Okech 2010; UNWTO 2011; Wilson et al.

2012). Sustainable tourism development adheres to the same definition by the WCED on sustainable development, but can be extended to include the needs of "the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future [and managing] all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecology processes, biological diversity, and life support systems" (WTO 1998, p.21).

For many countries tourism is the main source of foreign earnings (Ibrahim and Girgis 2008; UNWTO and SNV 2010) and can be a key driver in accelerating economies through job creation and small private enterprise development (Salih 2003). The United Nations (UN hereafter) furthermore consider it to be a major contributor to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (hereafter MDGs), in particular MDG 1 – Eradication of Poverty, MDG 3 – Gender Equality, MDG 7 – Environmental Sustainability and MDG 8 – Global Partnerships for Development (UNWTO 2011).

Whereas tourism used to be a more western-centric phenomenon, developing countries now receive almost half of all tourism arrivals, which are expected to reach 1.6 billion in international arrivals by 2020. This provides a viable solution to economic development and employment generation, especially for those countries with few economic alternatives (UNWTO 2010). Furthermore, it can be seen as a major contributor to peace if managed responsibly and involving host-communities (Malley 2002) through cross-cultural interaction and understanding (Higgins-Desbiolles 2008). However, in order to avoid exploitation of people and natural resources, tourism needs to be managed sensibly to ensure sustainable economic benefits for host communities (Bramwell 1998; Swarbooke 1999; ESCAP 2001; Pforr 2001; Tosun 2001; Richards and Hall 2002; UNEP 2002; Zsolnai 2002; Hall et al. 2005; Murphy and Price 2005; UNEP and WTO 2005; Cole 2006; Bramwell and Lane 2008; Sharpley 2010; UNWTO 2011). In this regard, research has become increasingly focused on sustainable tourism

approaches such as eco-tourism or pro-poor tourism, to name but a few, with emphasis on community-centric approaches to development (inter alia Taylor 1995; Marion 1996; Scheyvens 1999; Telfer 2000; Tosun 2000; Richards and Hall 2002; Blackstock 2005; Butcher 2006; Kayat 2008; Okazaki 2008; Goodwin and Santilli 2009; Stone and Stone 2011).

It is important to stress that keeping a balance between the three main components is key to the concept of sustainability. However, it can be justifiably argued that in order to achieve this, a bottom up approach is favourable in the context of tourism development which involves the empowerment of poor communities. For this research study, emphasis is therefore put on a community-centric view to sustainable development, which means that the community and its various stakeholders are involved and encouraged to participate in decision-making processes and that goals are locally defined (Timothy 1998; Mbaiwa 2005; Byrd 2007).

1.2.2 Tourism and Rural Development in India

In India, one of the fastest growing economies in the world, tourism is one of the emerging economies within the country (Sarkar and George 2010). While growth from tourism has taken a drastic cut (coinciding with extensive media coverage of rape cases), currently at 4.1% (UNWTO 2014) compared to 12% growth in 2010 (UNWTO 2010), it has nonetheless experienced remarkable growth in recent year climbing from 34th place in international tourism receipts in 1998 to 16th place in 2010 (Government of India - Ministry of Tourism 2011). At the same time, there is a significant gap between economic development in urban and rural areas. Of the 25% of India's population living below the poverty line, 75% live in rural areas (World Bank 2010), underlining that economic benefit has been very much urban-centric (Sarkar and George 2010). Looking at ways in which such rural development issues can be addressed more extensively is therefore of greatest importance. In this context, mirroring his colleagues' views mentioned above,

Verma (2005a) believes alternative, pro-poor tourism that involves community-based initiatives could be a catalyst for development for such areas in India.

As for many rural economies in the world, agriculture is of major importance to India as a whole (Gopal, Varma, and Gopinathan 2010). However, the sector's contribution to the economy has been decreasing for decades (FAO 2006) and in some areas is becoming an increasingly difficult task with an ever-growing number of people migrating to urban areas in hope for better employment opportunities (Gopal, Varma, and Gopinathan 2010). In this regard tourism has potential to buck this trend by generating employment, providing additional income through business diversification, and furthermore combine a declining and a booming sector.

It is extensively addressed by a multitude of researchers (inter alia Webber and Ison 1995; Blackman et al. 2004; Koutra 2010; Wilson et al. 2012) that a key to sustainable tourism development is community involvement in decision-making, which is being incorporated in tourism planning in a variety of ways. The co-operative business approach, which has proven to be successful in other industries in India, such as the dairy industry, is widely believed to be a suitable and sustainable business model to address the development needs of rural areas (Timothy 1998; Birchall 2004; Verma 2005a; Birchall and Simmons 2009; Mehta 2010), which may translate into a tourism context.

1.2.3 The Co-operative

The proposed study aims to investigate a co-operative approach to tourism, which as a business model for sustainable development in its own right is not novel in any way, but appears to be a profoundly under-researched topic in regard to tourism (Verma 2005b). The benefits of the co-operative as a sustainable business model, and in particular in developing countries, have been much discussed in the relevant literature (Stettner 1965; Holmen 1985; Hill 2000; Birchall 2004; Ferrier

2004; Verma 2005a; Youd-Thomas 2005; Simmons and Birchall 2008; Birchall and Simmons 2009; Chakrabarty and Gosh 2009; Hanqin, York, and Kenny 2009; Green and Marcone 2010; ICA 2010; Mehta 2010; Zhao and Develtere 2010; Ketilson 2011; Kalmi 2013), considering that they comprise values that could address many of the key issues faced by rural communities in developing countries (Bramwell 1998; ESCAP 2001; OCDC 2003; UNWTO 2011) as expressed by seven key principles shown in the Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 – The Co-operative Principles

Core Principles	Voluntary and Open Membership Democratic Member Control Economic Participation of Members Autonomy and Independence
Secondary Principles	Concern for Community Co-operation among co-operatives Education

(ICA 2010)

These can help to:

- Enable the poor to develop their own skills and help themselves
- Overcome socio-cultural barriers through open membership
- Improve the economic situation of its members as benefits go directly to the members
- Raise self-esteem and increase control over developments as decision-making is placed in the hands of locals

- Improve the community in which it operates through reinvestment and hence increase long-term sustainability

Several studies have been conducted in the area of co-operatives and rural development, for example: Stettner 1965; Philipp 1966; Holmen 1985; Birchall 1997; Birchall 2003; Birchall 2004; ILO 2004; Gorman 2005; Simmons and Birchall 2008; Aref and Sarjit 2009; Birchall and Ketilson 2009; Birchall and Simmons 2009; Chakrabarty and Gosh 2009; Green and Marcone 2010; Mehta 2010; or Shaikh 2010. Many of these were based on quantitative surveys with members of existing co-operatives and aimed at determining how effective co-operatives are in poverty alleviation. However, as co-operatives can vary considerably in form of size and nature, drawing generalisations from these studies can be a challenge (Verma 2005a; Simmons and Birchall 2008). The lack of local statistics in many developing countries in general that could be used for comparisons adds to the difficulties in evaluating the model (Birchall and Simmons 2009). Birchall and Simmons (2009) also point out that despite enormous resources that have been invested in the development of co-operatives in developing countries, many have failed. This was mainly due to top-down approaches, where co-operatives were not really autonomous associations, but government led. Where co-operatives were indeed autonomous and practicing under the ICA's principles, such as in dairy co-operatives in India or Bangladesh, they have been successful (Birchall and Simmons 2009).

With regard to tourism, there is an overall lack of data on the number of co-operatives involved in the industry and infrequent academic attempts exist to define a comprehensive framework and outlining the strengths and weaknesses of those that do exist (Hanqin, York and Kenny 2009), again, making transferable evaluations difficult. Hence, more research is needed to identify and learn from success stories, as well as understanding the weaknesses of the approach, and identifying ways in which challenges may be overcome.

1.2.4 Stakeholder Theory

Within this thesis frequent reference is made to 'stakeholders', hence a short discussion of terminology and contextualisation is required.

Freeman (1984) is largely considered to be the first one to conceptualize the concept of stakeholder theory and management, which has become an important factor in organisational sustainability by paying increasing attention to satisfying the needs and expectations of its stakeholders (Freeman 1984). Freeman defines stakeholders as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman 1984, p.46). In a tourism context these are therefore those, who can affect or may be affected by tourism development in an area, such as consumers, co-workers or any other pressure group (Garvare and Johansson 2010). Clarkson (1995) makes the distinction between primary stakeholders or active participants (whose participation is integral to the success of development) and secondary or passive stakeholders (who may affect or be affected by development, but are not integral to the success).

In the debate on sustainable tourism development, achieving community support and stakeholder engagement is seen as one of the main keys to success (Gunn 2002). This does not imply that all stakeholders must be equally involved in decision-making processes; however, it is vital that all stakeholders' needs are well understood, which may otherwise result in the failure of the entire process (Clarkson 1995; Donaldson and Preston 1995).

For this research, stakeholders are considered to be all those who are active participants in the co-operative tourism project, as well as those who may be affected by it. In this case, primary stakeholders are the members of the co-operatives, whereas secondary stakeholders are members of the wider community in which the development takes place and who remain passive in this project.

These two stakeholder groups make up the majority of participants for this study. Furthermore, tourism experts, local politicians and academics make up a further group of participants, who could perhaps be classified as tertiary stakeholders, as they are neither active participants, but also do not live within close proximity of the villages under investigation and would only be affected indirectly.

1.3 Research Approach and Methods

The aim of this research is to develop an understanding of the potential for a co-operative approach to sustainable rural tourism development. While tourism and co-operatives are widely researched fields in their own rights, to the researcher's best knowledge, no relevant theoretical frameworks combining the two exist on which this research could be based. Therefore, research was explorative in nature.

Focus was put on building original theory by conducting semi-structured interviews and capturing the experience, perceptions and attitudes of those involved in the project, from which a deeper understanding of the concept could be developed, hence, implying qualitative data collection. A phenomenological approach was adopted, because it is inductive and therefore allows the development of general principles or theory based on specific data (Denscombe 2007). Furthermore, it allows for the interpretation of subjective experiences of those involved in the research. As theory testing, or building upon existing knowledge, was not a real option in this case, it made a phenomenological approach a most powerful and appropriate option. Semi-structured interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to gain in-depth understanding of the issue with use of some pre-determined key questions to help categorisation and provide some degree of consistency throughout the interviews (Altinay and Paraskevas 2008).

Local stakeholders and members of newly formed tourism co-operatives in Uttarakhand and West Bengal were put at the centre of investigation, with a focus on participants' narratives of their current life situation, and strengths and

challenges within their communities. Additional participants were academics and local politicians. This allowed the researcher to gain a more comprehensive picture of the potential for co-operative tourism in rural India by integrating a variety of perspectives.

Developing an understanding of the specific nature and challenges evident within these communities was critical in order to further establish if and how tourism could address some of these challenges and also where its limitations may lie. Furthermore, the perceptions and attitudes of these rural communites towards tourism in general, and specifically on the prospects of forming tourism co-operatives and how these may help in alleviating some of their struggles were established. Particularly the distinctive attributes associated with adopting a co-operative approach to tourism development was of interest to the researcher as it was fundamental in determining in which ways it sets itself apart from alternative approaches. In addition, challenges of implementing the approach locally were determined, as were the implications for replicating such an approach in the future. Collectively, these findings allowed the development of the framework presented in Chapter 5, Analysis and Discussion, which defines strengths and weaknesses of a co-operative tourism approach from a stakeholder perspective and makes a tentative assessment for its suitability towards rural development in developing countries that can be used as basis for further research by academics, and inspire application by practioners and policy makers.

1.4 Research Context

Research took place in a number of remote rural villages during three trips to two states of India: The Himalayan state Uttarakhand in the north and the eastern state West Bengal. Both states are among the least developed areas in India with almost stagnant economies, high unemployment and poverty and where tourism is not a major contributor to the economy (Shah and Gupta 2000).

Figure 1.1 – Field Work Setting

(Edge of India 2013a)

The decision on the specific setting of the research study was influenced by two main factors. The researcher was interested in basing her research in a rural area of a developing country, which often fail to benefit from national development strategies and hence suffer most extensively from the consequences of poverty. Contributing to finding ways in which rural areas can be more effectively included in development was therefore a prime goal of this thesis.

A second factor, and of no less significance, was that Queen Margaret University (QMU hereafter) was leading a co-operative tourism development a project in rural India since October 2010 (see Appendix 1: QMU Involvement in Project), coinciding with the beginning of the Ph.D. study. This provided the researcher with an opportunity to look at a live project from its early development stages and

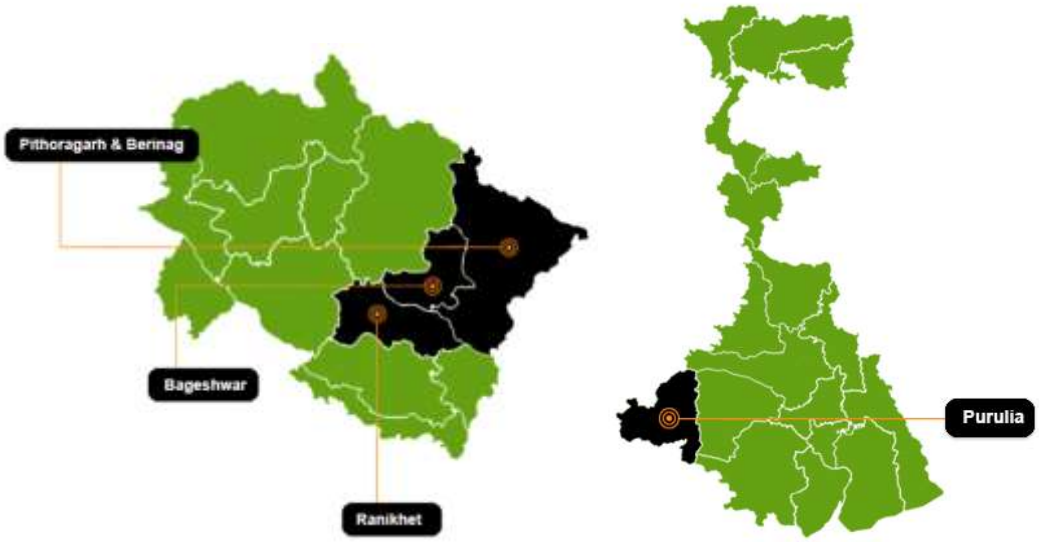
presented a clearly defined sample frame for the research, as focus was in majority put on the participants of the IDF project, predominantly members of these newly formed tourism co-operatives. This made access to participants easier and allowed the researcher to tap into participants' motivations to join, and understand their expectations in undertaking such a project.

It must be noted that whilst the researcher accompanied the project partners on two occasions and attended meetings and workshops in India, she was not actively involved in the implementation of the project and sought to remain a neutral observer at all times.

1.4.1 Background of the Co-operative Tourism Project

This research is looking at a network of newly formed tourism co-operatives, which were developed through a £383,000 program funded by the Scottish Government through its International Development Fund for the South Asia Development Programme (referred to as IDF project hereafter), running over a period of two years and nine months, and implemented by a variety of partners in India and Scotland. QMU was the lead partner in the project, working in partnership with Dunira Strategy, an Edinburgh based tourism consultancy firm. The Indian bank 'Yes Bank' acted as country manager, being responsible for money transfers and logistics within India. The aim of the project was to deliver sustainable economic development in some of the most socially and economically disadvantaged districts of India through capacity building and marketing, and, through a self-help approach, create tourism enterprise opportunities through a co-operative destination management organisation model. A network of tourism co-operatives was established in four districts (see Figure 1.2), with each district operating as a co-operative Destination Management Organisation (hereafter cDMO) under the name 'Edge of India'.

Figure 1.2 – Field Work Districts



(Edge of India 2013a)

A powerful marketing tool, the online portal or 'virtual cDMO' – the 'Edge of India' website, was developed by an additional project partner, eZone Software. Local co-ordinators were trained on the management of this, which was then to be handed over to the locals entirely at the end of the project and who would continue to be responsible for managing and updating it.

Figure 1.3 – Screenshot Edge of India Website

(Edge of India 2013b)

Research on the project started at roughly the same time as the project implementation on the ground. The IDF project goals are presented below and will be revisited in Chapter 5.

- To achieve sustainable economic growth through tourism and alleviate poverty by building human infrastructure in form of skills development
- To build local capacity and use local resources to develop the destination.
- To enable local communities to make the most of their cultural and natural heritage, by helping people see the potential of their communities, harness the culture, craft, heritage and beauty of their landscape.
- To learn how to package and market their new tourism destinations to a global market place.

1.5 Significance of Study

The debate on how to best achieve sustainable tourism development is far from over and overall little progress has been made in achieving sustainable tourism principles in practice (Hall 2000). In the most general sense, this study will therefore advance the academic debate on sustainable development through tourism. An original contribution is made by putting forward the co-operative business model as an approach, which has been successful in addressing the socio-economic needs of rural communities, but at the same time has not yet been sufficiently conceptualised for tourism.

When embarking on research in the area of co-operative tourism the boundaries of any kind of academic discussion on the concept are quickly reached. The concept therefore offers huge scope for further research in its own right. More specifically, the findings presented in this thesis will add to the general understanding of how tourism co-operatives work in practice, by looking at the phenomenon from one specific angle, adopting a phenomenological approach and exploring a stakeholder perspective. By investigating the topic using the example of a number of co-operative tourism networks in rural India, this study highlights a new way of promoting sustainable development in rural areas of developing countries. Most importantly, it creates a starting point for understanding in which way benefit can be derived from the co-operative model in this context. At the same time, the challenges in its practical application are outlined.

The findings from this study have significant interdisciplinary value as they contribute to a variety of fields, such as sustainable tourism, rural development and co-operative studies, and are aimed at encouraging academic engagement and discussion with the topic. Furthermore, this research makes a contribution to practice and may be of interest to tourism planners, those involved in development studies, local government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs herafter) and other development agencies, policy makers, or communities entertaining the idea of getting involved in co-operative activities in a tourism

context. Applying the lessons learned from this study has the potential to actively contribute to improving the livelihoods of rural communities by building on the strengths of the approach and understanding the challenges. A degree of transferability has furthermore been achieved through thematic sampling. Research was carried out in two states of India and within these with different districts and communities. The findings hence can be expected to be transferable to a variety of settings in other states of India, and perhaps other countries, with particular relevance, though not exclusively, to the problems faced by rural areas of developing countries.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter One introduced co-operative tourism as a sustainable approach to rural development as the core of this study and set the scene for the rest of this thesis. The context of the study was outlined in regard to the research background and methodological choices. Furthermore, the significance of this research project and its contribution to knowledge were touched upon.

Chapter Two positions the concept of co-operative tourism in current academic discourse on sustainable tourism development and establishes a theoretical accumulative advantage.

Chapter Three outlines the research design of this study and enters into a discussion on philosophical choices, methodological implications and methods applied.

Chapter Four presents the findings from the interviews with local stakeholders.

Chapter Five discusses and interprets the findings and furthermore links the real-life experience of the phenomenon with relevant theory established in chapter two.

Chapter Six concludes the study and revisits limitations, opportunities for further research and establishes the original contribution to knowledge made with this research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature relevant to the discussion on a co-operative approach to sustainable tourism rural development. In order to gain a thorough understanding of the background on which this thesis is built, five main concepts will be reviewed here: Sustainable Development; Sustainable Tourism; Rural Development; Community-based tourism; and the Co-operative. A literature review on sustainable development builds the foundation from which much of the subsequent discussion stems, and which is seen as a prerequisite for sustainable tourism development by many. Rural Development and its importance in the broader discussion on sustainable development will then be reviewed before looking at tourism as a tool to improve rural livelihoods and applying this to the Indian context. Finally, co-operatives will be discussed in general, but also more specifically in regard to the role they play in empowering communities, particularly in developing countries. The link between co-operatives and tourism will also be reviewed here, which reveals a clear lack of academic research in this regard.

2.1 Sustainable Development – A Brief History

The concept of sustainable development has been much debated for many decades, but was only formalized in 1987 when the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published 'Our Common Future', also known as the 'Brundtland Report' (WCED 1987). It defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p. 43) and takes into consideration the interdependency between economic, environmental and socio-cultural development (WCED 1987; Wall 1997; Salih 2003).

One of the earliest pieces written on sustainability was 'The Tragedy of the Commons' by Hardin in 1968, questioning the limits to a finite nature and selfishness of mankind (Hardin 1968). This was followed by 'The Limits to Growth' in 1972, which illustrated the detrimental consequences of human activity on the environment if the then present rate of growth and consumption continued (Meadows et al. 1972). In the same year, the political and public debate on environmental protection and human developments began with the first UN Earth Summit being held. Influenced by the subsequent debates, the 'Brundtland Report' was published in 1987, which is still considered to be one of the most important publications on sustainable development (Swarbooke 1999; Pforr 2001). It discusses the effects of humanity on the planet and how we may live more sustainably in order to preserve the natural environment for future generations. In 1992 the second Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro took place, where an official goal was declared to make all development sustainable and Agenda 21, a plan for action was published, which was adopted by more than 178 governments (UN 1992; UNCED 1992). In 2000, world leaders set new sustainable development goals for 2015 at the UN in New York – the UN Millennium Declaration – now more commonly known as the Millennium Development Goals (hereafter MDGs). These goals include reducing world poverty and hunger by half and promoting environmental sustainability, among others (UN 2011) (see Appendix 2: The Millenium Development Goals).

In June 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development – 'Rio+20' – took place in Rio de Janeiro, following up on the milestone conference in 1992. The conference produced the document 'The Future We Want', in which a commitment to previous publications and promoting sustainable development, the Millennium Development Goals and especially eradicating poverty was reaffirmed by heads of state (UN 2012a). While the conference resulted in governments, the private and civic sector committing to $513bn in funding towards achieving sustainable development as well as concrete pledges for action in regard to waste management and women empowerment (Saxena 2012; UN 2012b). The world press, however, expressed highly critical views of the

conference's outcomes which were non-binding and put too much emphasis on economic growth at the expense of the environment (Confino 2012; Lean 2012). According to Norwegian premier Gro Harlem Brundtland, governments had "forgotten about the environment" (cited in Lean 2012, p.1). Others felt the conference lacked overall momentum to make any significant changes in development (Black 2012) and despite some promising ideas, contained too "many mays but few musts" (The Economist 2012). Nonetheless, such conferences remain important in the continuous process of the reassessment of sustainable development (Murphy and Price 2005).

The debate on sustainable development, strategies and responsibilities has been ongoing for decades and will undoubtedly continue. The importance of looking at ways in which sustainable development can be promoted has become even more important on a global level in view of the recent financial crises and the threat of global warming, both highlighting the interconnectivity of systems and irrelevance of national borders. At any rate, it is certain that the debate has indeed become of major importance to any nation and industry, and perhaps particularly so to the tourism industry, as further discussed below.

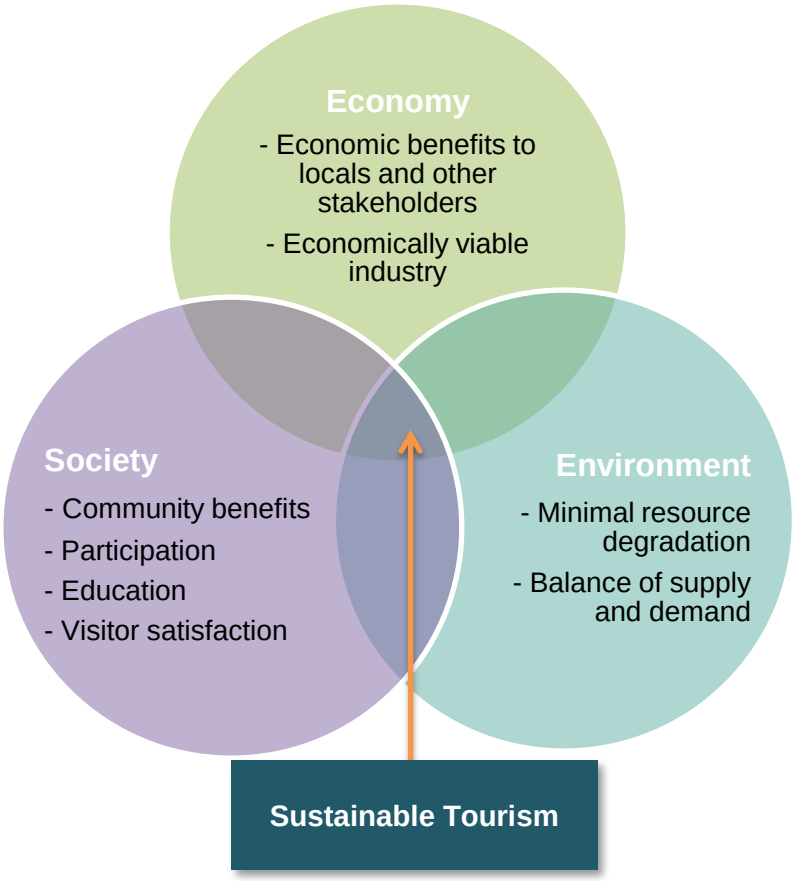
2.2 Sustainable Tourism Development

Tourism is often referred to as one of the world's biggest industries (Davidson 2005; WTTC 2012). It currently accounts for 1 in 11 jobs, generates 6% of world exports and has seen a dramatic increase in international tourists from 25 million in the 1950s to 1087 million in 2013 (UNWTO 2014). It can play an integral role in the development of countries and regions (Howie 2003; Ibrahim and Girgis 2008; UNWTO and SNV 2010) and hence, the debate on sustainable development and the impact of human activity on the planet is also indispensable for the tourism industry.

While tourism can have significant positive impact, for example in terms of economic contributions, it can also bring substantial negative impacts. These began to be recognised in the late 1970s and early 80s, following the first UN Earth Summit in 1972, where environmental protection and human developments, including tourism, were discussed (UN 1992; Swarbooke 1999). As the debate on sustainable development intensified over the years, the 1990s in particular saw an increase of concern in the role tourism played in it (Howie 2003), as it could not only bring immense economic benefit to an area, but at the same time destroy the environment and undermine local communities (Youell 1998; Swarbooke 1999). An understanding emerged that while these impacts could not be prevented entirely, they could be planned for and managed and henceforth, tourism has become closely interlinked with the debate on sustainable development (Archer, Cooper, and Ruhanen 2005).

With the increase in global tourism, conducting development in a sustainable manner is becoming an even more pressing issue (Richards and Hall 2002; Mbaiwa 2005; Murphy and Price 2005). However, despite the popularity of the term ‘sustainable tourism’, confusion still exists in regard to what exactly this entails in practice (Gunn and Var 2002; Sharpley 2010). In theory, however, it is generally accepted to encompass the interdependency and balance between three main components; the economy, environment and society, as shown in Figure 2.1

Figure 2.1 – Model of Sustainable Tourism Principles



(Jenkins, Hall, and Kearsley 1997)

Echoing the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987) mentioned above, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (hereafter UNWTO), states that sustainable tourism development:

> "meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future [and managing] all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecology processes, biological diversity, and life support systems" (UNWTO 1998, p. 21).

Today, tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Despite the economic crises tourism has continued to grow at close to 4% per year, with early 2012 producing a 5% growth rate of international tourism (UNWTO 2012). Tourism employs more people than any other industry making up 8.7% of total employment, including indirect employment, such as transport (WTTC 2012). As stated above, it accounts for almost 10% of global spending (UNWTO 2014) with direct and indirect contributions of US$6.3 trillion to the global GDP (WTTC 2012). In 2012, international tourism arrivals passed the one billion mark for the first time as well as surpassing $1 trillion in tourism receipts (UNWTO 2012). Hence, it plays a significant role in the economic development of many countries through the creation of employment and investment opportunities (Ibrahim and Girgis 2008; Mbaiwa 2005). For 46 of the 49 least developed countries it is the main source of foreign earnings (Bolwell and Weinz 2008).

The interconnectivity between the three key components of sustainable development, the environment, the economy and socio-cultural aspects are integral to the concept, as already portrayed in Figure 2.1, which exemplifies in a simple yet powerful way that development is only sustainable if each component is taken into consideration. If one is weak or absent, sustainability cannot be achieved. Tourism development is promoted by many governments because of its force to drive economic development and by acting as a generator for national as well as regional development through employment opportunities or improved infrastructure (Archer, Cooper and Ruhanen 2005). A major motivator in this are therefore the economic prospects, which reflect the wellbeing of a society, especially in a developing country context (Salih 2003; Mbaiwa 2005). It is also seen as more and more critical in reference to the UN goal to halve world poverty by 2015 (UNEP and WTO 2005). Many believe that tourism could play a major role in achieving this, as it can create enterprise development and employment opportunities to areas with very few alternatives and act as a counterbalance to other activities that could have worse environmental or socio-cultural impact (Giddings, Hopwood, and O'Brien 2002). Then again, there is evidence for a correlation between tourism, poverty and sexual exploitation (Shah and Gupta

2000), once more putting emphasis on the importance of sustainable and ethical management practices (Fennell 2006). Economic prospects can also lead to an over-dependency on tourism and furthermore put a community under pressure to focus more on growth than sustainability and through this neglect the natural environment in favour of quick developments. Pforr (2001) for instance, argues that an over-emphasis on economic gains through tourism has led to ecological problems being neglected in the past. Policies promoting sustainable development can help in minimising this threat, as well as ensuring fair treatment of all those employed in the industry (UNEP and WTO 2005). Ibrahim and Girgis (2008) make the case that the long-term negative consequences of unsustainable development are likely to outweigh any economic gain and this argument leads back to the initial debate, that creating a balance between driving economic development, while minimising negative impacts on the natural environment and society should be the aim of policy makers as well as the private sector (Salih 2003).

Reiterating the previously used quote by Gunn and Var (2002, p.21), that no other form of development "has so many far-reaching tentacles as does tourism", underlines that tourism is heavily intertwined with other industries (Davidson 2005). It therefore has significant potential to destroy the very resources upon which it depends if the environment, economy and society in which it operates are managed in an unsustainable manner (Byrd 2007). Being so dependent on the natural and human environment, one could argue that it makes common-sense for the various sectors making up the tourism industry to adopt sustainable tourism principles (Murphy and Price 2005). Faced with the serious challenges of climate change, environmental degradation and growing public awareness regarding these matters, this will only become increasingly important (Swarbooke 1999; Murphy and Price 2005; UNEP and WTO 2005; Jayawardena et al. 2008; Verbeek and Mommaas 2008). Then again, in some regard, economic benefits can also act as a key driver to environmental sustainability in tourism (Swarbooke 1999; Jayawardena et al. 2008), but only if, as Mbaiwa (2005) suggests, environmental sustainability is addressed as soon as the natural environment becomes part of the

tourism product. If managed properly, economic contributions from tourism can then be used to further invest in cultural projects and safeguard the environment (UNEP 2002; Zsolnai 2002; Jayawardena et al. 2008). Some positive examples exist, where tourism income or voluntary contributions from tourists have contributed to the preservation and restoration of important cultural sites (Shah and Gupta 2000).

A lot of emphasis in the sustainable tourism literature is put on minimising environmental impacts form tourism (Swarbooke 1999; Richards and Hall 2002; UNEP and WTO 2005; Jayawardena et al. 2008; Verbeek and Mommaas 2008). Communities are dependent on the resources available to them and have the power to preserve them for tourism or destroy these very assets, with uncontrolled tourism developments (Swarbooke 1999; Richards and Hall 2002; UNEP and WTO 2005; Byrd 2007; Jayawardena et al. 2008; Verbeek and Mommaas 2008). The natural environment is in fact often the driving force behind tourism movement, which leads to disposable income within communities and consequently a multiplier effect, which benefits the local and national economy. In such cases economic benefits emerge as a result of natural resources (Salih 2003). However, putting monetary value on the intangible benefits of the environment and finding ways to measure its worth in order to compare it to economic benefits poses its own problems (Salih 2003).

Nonetheless, since profit is usually the main driving force for any kind of business (Swarbooke 1999), emphasizing the positive impact sustainable tourism practices can have on long-term business success must be a key factor in promoting the concept (Swarbooke 1999; UNEP 2002; Miller and Twining-Ward 2005). It is therefore of great significance for the various stakeholders in the tourism industry to recognize the importance of sustainable development and the role they play in this. Furthermore, it is vital to acknowledge the interrelation of the economic, social and physical environment of a country in order to achieve sustainability (WCED 1987; Swarbooke 1999; Wall 1997; Richards and Hall 2002; Salih 2003). Some argue (Swarbooke 1999; Giddings, Hopwood and O'Brien 2002) that policy

makers need to put more emphasis on this, in particular on the economy and the environment and on the fact that they are inseparable within the context of sustainable tourism This means focusing on the long-term viability of businesses and their activities and reducing apprehensions stakeholders might have by emphasizing the financial benefits and costs of sustainable tourism, while at the same time managing resources sustainably and conserving the natural heritage on which they are based (UNEP and WTO 2005). Then again, others argue that tourism development can be too focused on economic gains or environmental preservation, with the socio-cultural dimension being neglected altogether (Cole 2006). Referring again to Figure 2.1, sustainable tourism can only truly be achieved when the three main components are at a balance with each other. Minimising the negative socio-cultural impacts on requires community involvement and integration of stakeholders in decision-making processes, will be discussed more in-depth in Point 2.5, Community-Based Tourism.

Wall (1997) stresses that sustainable tourism development must distinguish between ensuring the longevity of tourism as an industry at all costs, which could be considered sustainable in some sense, and the question in which way tourism can contribute to sustainable development. He takes the debate of sustainable tourism development back to the terminology of *development* in general, saying that the term is up to individual interpretation and has evolved from a mainly economic perspective to one that also encompasses social factors and that is seen as a process of, usually, positive change. Development can therefore be seen from different perspectives: as a philosophy, a process, a plan or a product (Wall 1997). It can however come with the western bias of looking at the west as being *developed* and other countries as *lacking development*. Similarly, the concept of sustainable development has been criticised for its ambiguity as it can also be considered as a philosophy, a process, a plan or a product (Robinson 2004). At the same time both Robinson (2004) and Wall (1997) argue that this allows for a certain degree of flexibility when applying and adapting it to different cultural settings and scenarios, which, as Koutra (2010) also points out, do not come with a one-size-fits-all approach.

For the reasons outlined earlier, tourism is widely reconised as a tool for developed and developing countries to improve their economic situation (Ibrahim and Girgis 2008; Koutra 2010), while potentially putting significant pressure on communities and the environment. The previous discussion has outlined the importance of the interdependency between economic gain and protecting natural resources, while also minimising negative impacts on local communities. Particularly in the context of developing countries, research is increasingly focused on this last point, sustainable tourism approaches which are community-centric. Revisiting the argument that we live in a global system and the importance of achieving sustainable development within this, the debate now returns to the conundrum of how 1.22 billion people living below the poverty line of $1.25 a day (World Bank 2014a), mostly in rural areas of developing countries, can be integrated in development process and how the long-term balance between humans, nature and widespread economic prosperity within these societies can be achieved (Garvare and Johansson 2010).

2.3 Rural Development

There is no single agreed definition of what *rural* entails. Rural areas are heterogeneous in nature and hence finding a definition that applies to all is problematic. Holland, Burian and Dixey (2003) however make the point that "people know a rural area when they see one" (Holland, Burian and Dixey 2003, p.5). Such recognisable attributes may be: population density; remoteness from metropolitan centres; open spaces; and agricultural activities (Robinson 1990). Lane (1994) extends this to include traditional social structures, such as a stronger sense of community, slower pace of life and being closer to nature. Furthermore, they may be associated with long distances and poor infrastructure, and resulting in high transaction costs (Ashley and Maxwell 2001). National governments might mainly define 'rural' in regard to population density; however, Roberts and Hall (2001) point out that there is little commonality as to where the threshold for such a definition lies. For example, whereas Italy and Spain set the threshold for rural settlements at fewer than 10,000 people, Denmark and Norway set this at

fewer than 200 inhabitants (Roberts and Hall 2001). Also, whereas rural Scotland covers 95% of the land area, but only accounts for 18% of the population (The Scottish Government 2014), India's rural population makes up 69% of the total population, who are vastly dependent on agriculture and who suffer from high levels of poverty and unemployment (Government of India - Ministry of Rural Development 2014).

Again, this shows that a universal definition may be difficult to find and would perhaps be counterproductive. The OECD (1993) makes the important distinction between: Economically integrated rural areas, which are close in distance, but also close economically and culturally to urban areas; Intermediate rural areas, which are relatively distant from urban areas and largely consist of agricultural land use, which are nonetheless easily accessible; and remote or peripheral rural areas, which are far away from urban areas and may also have low quality land. For this thesis, the broader understanding of *rural* was adopted as defined by Lane (1994), Ashley and Maxwell (2001) and Robinson (1990), hence constituting of a non-urban, remote area with a poor infrastructure, open spaces, predominantly agricultural activities and a strong sense of community. The majority of arguments presented below refer to remote or peripheral rural areas as defined by the OECD (1993).

While a universal definition may not be settled here, what can be agreed upon is that rural communities across the world face similar dilemmas: Agricultural activities are decreasing and finding new economic opportunities, especially for young people, can be a major challenge (Blackman et al. 2004; IFAD 2010). This largely holds true for developed as well as developing countries and many of the arguments presented in this section may be applicable to either. However, the following sections are primarily concerned with the discussion of rural development in a developing country context, where the majority of the world's poor live, and where the problems commonly faced by rural communities are intensified through poverty (IFAD 2010; World Bank 2014). Within this

discussion, focus is put on India, where primary research took place (further discussed in Chapter 3: Methodology and Chapter 4: Findings). Benefits from tourism have been very much urban-centric across the world (Higgins-Desbiolles 2008) and India is no exception to this. Despite being one of the fastest growing economies in the world it still struggles with poverty and an unequal distribution of wealth between urban and rural areas (Sarkar and George 2010).

Finding general explanations for what constitutes rural poverty and how it may be overcome through sustainable development are problematic, again, due to the heterogeneous nature of communities. Problems vary across countries and even within countries and regions (IFAD 2010; Koutra 2010). Thus, simplifications become necessary that can then be adapted and extended to each specific and unique situation. Whereas the order of importance may differ, a broad review of literature has identified the following points as the most commonly expressed factors for rural areas to improve their livelihoods:

- Improvement of general infrastructure (services, access)
- Access to markets
- Access to credit
- Access to education, skill development and training, especially for women, children and marginalized groups
- Increasing agricultural productivity
- Diversifying away from farm employment in areas where agriculture has reached its limits
- Risk management and reduction
- Strengthening the "collective capabilities of rural people" (IFAD 2010, p.10), especially through membership organisations
- Local say in decision-making processes and planning

- Sustainable management of natural resources

(AusAid 2000; Roesner 2000; Shah and Gupta 2000; Blackman et al. 2004; Hall, Kirkpatrick, and Mitchell 2005; Kayat 2008; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010; IFAD 2010; Hall, Roberts, and Mitchell 2012).

Key in reducing poverty is creating opportunities for sustained economic growth (AusAid 2000). Increasing agricultural activities is largely expressed as one of the key success factors for rural development (IFAD 2010; Hall, Roberts and Mitchell 2012). Within this thesis, however, attention is paid to another key factor – the need of diversifying rural economies where agriculture has reached its limits (Holland, Burian, and Dixey 2003; IFAD 2010). In this regard, tourism can be proposed as a suitable activity for a number of reasons. It is, for example, cheaper and easier to establish than economies such as manufacturing (Wilson et al. 2012), but foremost, because it can be developed alongside agriculture or even be integrated into agriculture, for example in the form of agritourism. This may be able to avert an over-dependency on tourism as mentioned before (UNEP and WTO 2005) and lessen issues with seasonality where both industries complement each other (Wilson et al. 2012). However, this dictates an adherence to sustainable development principles and awareness on local and government level of the potentially negative impacts of tourism.

2.3.1 Tourism as a Tool for Rural Development

Tourism is part of the phenomenon of globalisation and development (Shah and Gupta 2000). It is widely accepted to be a significant contributor to social and economic benefit through employment creation and infrastructural development, especially in developing countries (Hall, Roberts and Mitchell 2012). With the increase in global tourism the number of countries receiving tourists has grown significantly, with many developing countries experiencing fastest growth and expected to overtake developed economies in tourist arrivals by 2015 (UNWTO 2012). Within the Asia and the Pacific region for instance, tourism arrivals have increased from 22.8 million in 1980 to 204 million in 2012, and this is expected to increase to 535 million arrivals by 2030 (UNWTO 2012). It is currently

experiencing the strongest growth of 6% compared to an average global growth rate of 5% (UNWTO 2014). The top tourism destinations, especially in developing countries, are rural, offering vast possibilities to many poor rural areas with tourism potential (Holland, Burian and Dixey 2003). Roberts and Hall (2001) refer to various estimates, which claim that rural tourism makes up 10-20% of all tourism activities; however, a true understanding of its contribution is difficult to achieve due to a distinct lack of systematic data from the UNWTO or other sources.

Many stress that the factors facilitating tourism differ drastically from country to country and furthermore, that rural areas in themselves are difficult to define. This makes finding common characteristics problematic and consequently, makes rural tourism equally difficult to define (Roberts and Hall 2001; Sharpley 2003; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010; Koutra 2010). Tourism can however be considered rural, when the rural component is one of the key assets of the product on offer and can be seen as a wider area that is defined by natural or socio-cultural boundaries, predominantly small-scaled and sustainable (Lane 1994; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010) and reflecting the varied nature of rural life and history (Lane 1994). Blackman et al. (2004) further describe it as tourism located in remote edges of regions. Depending on the prime component, rural tourism can be further segmented into, for example, agritourism, nature tourism or cultural tourism (Roberts and Hall 2001; Holland, Burian and Dixey 2003; Taware 2008 Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010). The distinguishing feature may be an absence of large holiday home developments, but rather giving the visitor opportunity for personalised contact and perhaps participation in activities carried out by locals and education on their culture (Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010).

As discussed above, tourism has become a catalyst for rural development for many developing and developed economies (Briedenhann and Wickens 2004; Ibrahim and Girgis 2008; Koutra 2010) to counteract the agricultural decline through diversification (Lane 1994; Holland, Burian and Dixey 2003; Byrd 2007)

often due to lack of viable alternatives (Telfer and Sharpley 2008). Hence, it can create income opportunities for poor rural communities as well as satisfying tourists needs (Sharpley 2003; Kayat 2008). Tourists are increasingly interested in heritage and are motivated by the desire to experience something different and if well managed, tourism can contribute to the preservation of traditional lifestyles in this regard (Roberts and Hall 2001; Briedenhann and Wickens 2004). Other positive effects can be, for example, improved general infrastructure of a destination (Shah and Gupta 2000) and spin-off enterprise development (Holland, Burian and Dixey 2003).

A difficulty in achieving this is the lack of skills and experience in peripheral areas (Blackman et al. 2004; Wilson et al. 2012). For these reasons, community involvement and cooperation among entrepreneurs can be a challenge, while at the same time being expressed as an important component for rural tourism (Wilson et al. 2012). Hence, tourism development can come with significant disadvantages for local communities (Koutra 2010), especially in the case of big tourism developments, such as luxury and golf resorts, and the effects of diverting natural resources away from local communities (Shah and Gupta 2000). In reality, many tourism enterprises or whole destinations are developed and managed by foreign, multi-national companies (Mbaiwa 2005; Okech 2010). These types of tourism development have shown to have a negative impact on religious life and cultural traditions, which may become staged and unauthentic as a result (Shah and Gupta 2000). In such cases, it can undermine and destabilize social structures and destroy what attracted people to the area in the first place (Roberts and Hall 2001). Women and children are the most vulnerable groups, making up 70% of the world's poor, while at the same time contributing 70% to the agricultural labour force in developing countries (AusAid 2000). They are also the most strongly affected group by the negative impacts of tourism, whereas those parts of society who are already better off usually benefit the most (Shah and Gupta 2000). Hence, development strategies need to ensure that women are included in decision making processes and are able to equally benefit from them (AusAid 2000). At the same time, tourism has had a very positive impact on the status of women in

some areas, where it has provided them with income through trades such as handicrafts, which raised their position at home. In areas where local communities are in charge, there is more employment for women and less so where outsiders dominate (Shah and Gupta 2000).

A threat to rural tourism development can be an over-dependency on the same. Tourism is extremely sensitive to external forces and events (Telfer and Sharpley 2008) and an over-dependency on tourism can easily compromise sustainability, especially in rural areas (Sharpley 2003), but also to nations as a whole. The Middle East and North Africa, for example, were amongst the fastest growing tourism economies, however, have now seen a dramatic decline of -8% and -9% due to the Arab Spring in 2011 (UNWTO 2012) and are currently stagnant (UNWTO 2014). Incidentally, as a result of foot and mouth disease in Britain in 2001, rural tourism virtually collapsed in affected areas as well as the wider countryside (Sharpley 2003). For this reason, Butler and Clark (1992) believe that rural tourism should be developed to complement an existing economy rather than a weak economy, which may mean that local labour supply is low, thus resulting in outside investors coming in.

Many agree that a key to sustainable rural tourism development is community involvement in decision-making and that community-based, rural tourism has the potential to address many of the problems mentioned previously (Taylor 1995; Webber and Ison 1995; Marion 1996; Tosun 2000; Briedenhann and Wickens 2004; Blackstock 2005; Kayat 2008; Okazaki 2008; Koutra 2010; Torri 2010; Sarkar and George 2010; Wilson et al. 2012). Some argue that in order to achieve this, a paradigm shift from capitalist tourism developments to alternative tourism model is needed, which integrates and empowers local communities to help themselves (Mbaiwa 2005; Okech 2010; Sarkar and George 2010). Furthermore, in order to be sustainable, the community needs to be willing to engage in tourism and dictate the scale and pace of development (Briedenhann and Wickens 2004).

2.4 The Indian Context

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. While its growth rate has been slowing down from over 10% in 2010 to 5% in 2014, it is still well ahead of the UK's growth rate of 1.7% (World Bank 2014b). A population of over 1.2 billion (World Bank 2012) makes it the largest democracy in the world (Hannam and Diekmann 2011). While poverty remains a pressing issue, slow, but steady progress has been made in reducing it from 55% in 1973 to about 27% in 2004 and the Indian government continues to be committed to antipoverty programs, having allocated 6-7% of its budgetary expenditure to these (IFAD 2011) and improving basic services for the poor through elementary education, health services and rural roads (World Bank 2012). Nonetheless, approximately 300 million people still live below the poverty line of $1.25 a day and 456 million people live just above it (IFAD 2011).

Furthermore, Hannam and Diekmann (2011) claim that despite the reduction in absolute poverty, inequalities between rural and urban areas are intensifying. Where globalization has brought economic benefit, this has been very much urban-centric (Sarkar and George 2010) and the situation in the villages remains unchanged (Patra and Agasty 2013). Of the 25% of India's population living under the poverty level, 75% of these live in rural areas (World Bank 2010; Hannam and Diekmann 2011; IFAD 2011) and are consequently at increased risk of flooding or water droughts and generally vulnerable to natural disasters (IFAD 2011). Challenges to development in rural areas are similar to those in developing countries in general, such as lack of access to finance, illiteracy and loss of entitlement to resources, with women being the most disadvantaged group of people (IFAD 2011). Again, rural development has been of prime concern for the Indian Government; however, Metha (1996) claims that a lack of consistency in planning processes and short-term thinking are to blame for the slow progress in this regard. Three quarters of India's population are dependent on agriculture, however, the sector is quickly declining, which has resulted in extensive problems with migration to the cities (Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010). Improving

agricultural productivity as well as developing non-farm based activities has hence become a main focus for rural development programs (World Bank 2012).

2.4.1 Tourism India

As for many emerging economies, tourism has also become one of the flourishing economies for India, which experienced significant growth since the 1970s in international and domestic tourism (Shah and Gupta 2000). Despite this, until recently, this was seemingly not fully recognized or utilized by federal government (Sarkar and George 2010; Hannam and Diekmann 2011). To many (Birchall 2004; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010; Shaikh 2010; Taware 2008), however, it presents a tool, which could provide additional income through business diversification, generate employment and furthermore link the declining agricultural sector with the booming tourism sector.

Whereas India was lagging behind in regard to tourism development compared to other emerging economies such as Brazil or China, from the year 2000 to 2008, for example, international tourist arrivals had almost doubled from 2.65 million to 5.11 million visitors (Hannam and Diekmann 2011). In 2010 tourism was growing at almost 12% and climbed from 34thnd place in international tourism receipts in 1998 to 16th place in 2010 (Government of India - Ministry of Tourism 2011). Growth has been slowing down in consecutive year and taken a further cut in 2012 coinciding with the extensive media coverage of rape cases. Newspapers such as the Guardian (Rahman 2013) or the New York Times (Bagri and Timmons 2013) for instance refer to figures from the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India, reporting a 35% drop in female visitors to the country in 2013. Growth is currently at 4.1% (UNWTO 2014) and contributes 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of total employment (Shaikh 2010).

Taware (2008) points out that compared to the significant role tourism can play in generating employment, alleviate poverty and drive sustainable development,

India's share is rather small with just 0.38 % of the world's market. Hindrances to tourism developments in rural India are lack of basic infrastructure, such as sanitation and water supply; lack of accommodation; lack of guides; lack of hygiene and sanitation; xenophobia (Mott MacDonald 2007); and access to markets (Shah and Gupta 2000). Furthermore, ways to spread gains from tourism income and improvement of women's involvement in tourism needs to be facilitated more effectively (Shah and Gupta 2000; Blackman et al. 2004)

2.4.1.1 Rural Tourism India

Agriculture is of major importance to the majority of rural areas in the world, and this holds true for India as well. Agriculture is often referred to as the 'backbone of the Indian economy' (Taware 2008; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010; Shaikh 2010) and, being the largest economic sector, approximately 75% of the population are directly or indirectly dependent on it (World Bank 2012). However, the sectors' contribution to the economy is decreasing, creating immense problems with unemployment and accelerating migration away from the villages towards the cities (Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010). Hence, the sector needs to find ways to grow as well as diversify to activities beyond farming (Birchall 2004; Taware 2008; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010; Shaikh 2010; World Bank 2012). In this regard, tourism is seen as a favourable tool to provide additional income through business diversification and generating employment, which can provide additional income, reduce poverty, and furthermore combine a declining and a booming sector (Birchall 2004; Taware 2008; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010; Shaikh 2010). Participation in agritourism is already rising among Indian farmers who recognize the need to diversify their farming activities (Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010; Taware 2010).

Agritourism is highly complementary to India's development goals, as it combines travel with rural, agricultural settings and integrates produce into the tourism experience, which enables locals to diversify their activities while enhancing the value of their products. Gopal, Varma and Gopinthan (2010)

believe it comes with several advantages, such as being a low-cost investment, as the natural setting and resources are its main attraction. It can also improve environmental awareness among locals and visitors, improve investment in the development of natural resources, and raise farmer's self-esteem (Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010). According to Taware (2008) the principles of agritourism are simple: Tourists need something to see, such as animal or cultural festivals; they need to have something to do, such as participating in agricultural operations or playing rural games and; they need to have something to buy, such as crafts or fresh produce (Taware 2008).

Rural tourism or agritourism therefore have great potential to bring benefits to farmers. The most apparent benefits to rural communities are likely to be the economic gains of tourism. Furthermore, cultural gains can be in form of preservation of historic buildings and well as the preservation of the environment (Shah and Gupta 2000). However, it also has the potential of causing conflict when it interferes with the primary purpose of the agricultural business, especially in regard to visitor expectations (Taware 2010). A case study carried out by Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan (2010) also identified the following key challenges in the development of agritourism in West India: the exploitation of natural resources; increasing competition from other tourism sectors; maintaining hygiene; lack of government support; training farmers; security; and inconsistent and insufficient marketing (Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010). Taware (2010) points out that to date agritourism is receiving limited recognition of its development potential and recommends the establishment of an Indian Agritourism Council (IAC) that takes responsibility of the tourism product coordination, marketing, quality standards and training and addresses the key challenges of agritourism (Taware 2010). The Government of India (GoI) has however been investing in a rural tourism scheme, with the primary objective of spreading its socio-economic benefits in rural areas, especially to women and youth (Mott MacDonald 2007), as well as strengthening bonds and cooperation between cultures to improve understanding and peace between social groups through promoting community-based initiatives (Verma 2005b).

Although there is growing interest in local benefits from tourism, there seems to be a lack of information and understanding of common trends and explanatory factors upon which such strategies could be developed (Shah and Gupta 2000). A paper put forward by Shah and Gupta (2000) and the Overseas International Development Institute (ODI) synthesizes data from a range of case studies in Northern India and Nepal in order to identify processes and influencing factors for successful development. It focuses on community perceptions of tourism's impact on people's lives and the environment. In some cases, villages have experienced such rapid growth that clusters of small villages have become semi-urban. Although overall social structures seemed unaffected by this, visible changes in individuals became apparent, as well as signs of environmental degradation, an impact on the authenticity of local culture and cases of sexual exploitation (Shah and Gupta 2000). Sarkar and George (2000) question whether locals receive significant benefit from any kind of agency tourism and are hence opposed to this type of tourism. Still, whereas tourism has had many negative impacts in Northern India and Nepal, it has brought significant benefits to some areas, even if often distributed unequally (Shah and Gupta 2000). Therefore, Shah and Gupta (2000) believe that greater understanding among local communities of how tourism may affect them is needed in order to develop strategies to combat these issues and enhance tourism's positive impacts on the poor.

Alternatively, pro-poor tourism that involves community-based initiatives is increasingly considered to be a catalyst for development in these areas (Verma 2005b). IFAD (2010) mentions membership organisations in this regard that can strengthen the 'collective capabilities of rural people' (IFAD 2010, p.5). Others (Davolio 2006; ICA 2010; Verma 2005a) specifically point to the comparative advantage of the co-operative business model, which has proven to be successful in other industries in India, such as the dairy industry (further discussed in Point 2.6, The Co-operative).

2.5 Community-Based Tourism

The importance of community participation in tourism is much expressed in literature and is being increasingly seen as "the link between local and global" (Richards and Hall 2002, p. 3), and as the "receivers and transmitters of the forces of globalisation" (ibid). It has repeatedly been emphasized that a balance between economic benefit, socio-cultural aspects and environmental protection is vital to the integrity of the concept of sustainability. At the same time, in the context of this study, progress cannot be made without the inclusion of those involved, who must be empowered to drive development according to their needs and abilities. The primary perspective taken on sustainable development for this particular study is therefore community-centric, which views the community as agents of change rather than passive receivers.

Locally-driven and community based tourism (CBT hereafter), and community and stakeholder involvement in decision-making, is extensively addressed as a key to sustainable tourism development by a multitude of researchers (inter alia Webber and Ison 1995; Taylor 1995; Marion 1996; Timothy 1998; Shah and Gupta 2000; Telfer 2000; Tosun 2000; Richards and Hall 2002; Bramwell and Lane 2003; Blackman et al. 2004; Blackstock 2005; Mbaiwa 2005; Byrd 2007; Kayat 2008; Okazaki 2008; Singh et al. 2009; Garvare and Johansson 2010; Koutra 2010; Torri 2010; Majee and Hoyt 2011; Stone and Stone 2011; Wilson et al. 2012). The sustainability of a destination can largely be determined by looking at the ownership of the sector, especially the accommodation sector (Mbaiwa 2005) and any economic benefit for locals very much depends on if and how they are involved in tourism development (Shah and Gupta 2000). Where most investment comes from foreign companies, most of the revenue will not go back into the community and hence not be of much benefit to locals. Making matters worse, the community may lose control over their local resources altogether and it can infringe on their autonomy, which can have long lasting negative effects on an area and lead to resentment of any tourism activity by the local community (Mbaiwa 2005).

Community involvement in tourism in contrast is believed to reduce such negative impacts and improve its positive impacts, for example increase carrying capacity, through a more equal distribution of resources and shared knowledge (Okazaki 2008). According to Byrd (2007), understanding stakeholders' perceptions and motivations to engage in sustainable tourism, in particular private sector businesses, is an important step in this. He applies stakeholder theory to sustainable tourism development in this context. Stakeholder theory and community participation theory are similar in nature and can be considered key to the success of the concept, which cannot be achieved without taking their interests into account (Byrd 2007) and offering support through guidelines and partnerships between the industry, government and communities (Pforr 2001; Tosun 2001; Ibrahim and Girgis 2008). In essence, community-based planning that involves a variety of stakeholders would mean that:

- goals are locally defined
- all stakeholders are permitted and encouraged to participate in decision-making processes

(Timothy 1998; Mbaiwa 2005; Byrd 2007)

A difficulty with this is that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to tourism as it is complex and differs from setting to setting (Koutra 2010). The conceptualisation of what defines a community for instance is problematic, especially because of global communications, which no longer confine a community to a specific geographic locations and could hence be defined in spatial, social or economic terms (Richards and Hall 2002). Blackstock (2005) also criticises tourism literature for treating communities as a homogenous mass, when issues in sustainable development can both be posed by or solved by the local community. Likewise, tourism can be the cause of tension, when tourism is not equally welcome within communities and the benefits are more tangible to some than others (Richards and Hall 2002). Just the same, communities cannot be idealised into homogenously 'good', but it is important that a wide range in the

types of communities and sub-groups within these is acknowledged. Tourism can highlight inequalities and differences within communities, whereas in other scenarios a community may experience a common benefit, if not an individual one (Richards and Hall 2002). Different stakeholder groups should consequently be made aware of each other's interests in order to understand the reasoning behind development processes (Byrd 2007). Without stakeholder involvement, and failure to identify the needs of any key stakeholder group, sustainable development is perhaps little more than a marketing slogan.

Mbaiwa (2005) argues that communities also play an integral part in regard to socio-cultural impacts of tourism. In some cases the sole purpose of tourism is to experience communities and their life and culture. When communities reproduce themselves for tourism and conform solely to tourists' expectations, known as *staged authenticity*, this can lead to distortion of cultural identities (Richards and Hall 2002). Again, involving the community in planning is integral here to avoid resentment having a direct impact on the tourism experience (Pearce 2005).

Outlining the benefits of CBT in theory is fairly easy, however, in this regard Blackstock (2005) and Telfer (2000) point out the structural constraints communities often face. A difficulty in averting the negative impacts in rural areas of developing countries, is that the host community is often poor. This consequently has an impact on how truly empowered it can feel, in particular when faced with outside competition (Blackstock 2005). Okazaki (2008) adds, that few studies offer practical ways in which such community participation could be promoted. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of information and understanding of common trends and explanatory factors upon which such strategies could be developed (Shah and Gupta 2000). Additionally, more empirical research regarding alternative forms of tourism is required, which can underline the potential of tourism towards improving sustainable development in a more effective way than corporate tourism has been able to achieve (Salazar 2006). If the concept of sustainable tourism development is to become more

applicable to the real world, then industry and tourist stakeholders need to be made part of the academic discussion (Murphy and Price 2005). In regard to the above challenges in the practical application of community-centric approaches to tourism development, Majee and Hoyt (2011) believe that co-operatives could be "viable vehicles" (p.49) in driving this and achieving goals of socio-economic development by building capacity and mobilising resources.

The first part of this literature review painted a background picture of sustainable development and tourism and its importance in a global context with special emphasis on developing countries. Then rural development in developing countries in general and in India was discussed, the need to diversify rural economies, especially agriculture, and that tourism can act as a catalyst for sustainable development in this regard. This was followed by a brief outline of the increasing attention community-based-tourism is being given in literature. The following points will now look at how co-operatives can address many of the barriers faced by rural communities in developing countries, in regard to sustainable development in general and in a tourism context, and how they could facilitate community-centric tourism more effectively.

2.6 The Co-operative

Whereas CBT is a favoured approach by many, the previous chapter has outlined practical issues with this, especially in regard to lack of skills and access to finance. Strengthening the "collective capabilities of rural people" is however named as one of the key issues by IFAD (2010, p.10), in order to enable them to participate in economic growth, especially through membership organisations, which can improve people's confidence as well as minimize risks. In this regard a co-operative approach to development, which has an open-membership policy and follows a democratic structure, is ideally suited to empower communities, as this chapter aims to establish. However, co-operatives have not have been given much attention in a tourism context. This chapter will present any relevant discourse that does exist and furthermore highlight the comparative advantage co-operatives

may have in a tourism context, while at the same time pointing out gaps in knowledge.

2.6.1 A Concise Overview

Cooperation – *"The action or process of working together to the same end"* (The Oxford English Dictionary 2012).

Bacteria cooperate, animals cooperate, people and nations cooperate. But rather than for altruistic reasons, this is often due to non-cooperation being unprofitable, to the gain being greater for each individual by working together and putting ones self-interest aside for the benefit of all (Axelrod 1984). In essence, people have therefore cooperated and formed co-operatives of some sort for as long as humans have existed (Gorman 2005; Majee and Hoyt 2011). The ideology behind the co-operative movement as we know it today, however, can largely be dated back to Robert Owen (1771-1858), who is often referred to as the spiritual father of the movement and who recognised the devastating social consequences modern capitalism was inflicting on workers (Chayanov 1991). As a response to the industrial revolution (Smith and Ross 2006) and motivated by poor working conditions and lack of rights, a landmark was set in 1844 by workers in Rochdale, who, based on Owen's ideas, formed a society to better their working conditions and who developed the principles, which formed the basis of the seven principles below, still adopted by co-operatives today (Birchall 1997):

Table 2.1 – The Co-operative Principles

Core Principles	Voluntary and Open Membership Democratic Member Control Economic Participation of Members Autonomy and Independence
Secondary Principles	Concern for Community Co-operation among co-operatives Education

(ICA 2010)

In 1895 the International Co-operative Alliance (hereafter ICA) was founded, a non-governmental, independent organisation that still acts as a global voice and representative for co-operatives (ICA 2014). The ICA defines a co-operative as:

> "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations, through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise" (ICA 2010).

Co-operatives differ from other types of business by aligning to these principles, which makes them member-owned and -controlled (Majee and Hoyt 2011). In the most general terms, 'traditional' business, in contrast, tends to be investor-owned, run under single ownership or with a small group of partners and shareholders (Novkovic 2008) and has profit at its core. The co-operative, however, goes beyond this. It is jointly owned by its members (Novkovic 2008) and hence aims to create profit or other benefits for its members. The innately democratic business structure, with all members being owners and therefore having direct control over the way it operates due to the 'one member, one vote' principle, means that members can elect and dismiss its management (Kalmi 2013), another

distinctive difference to 'traditional' business. Whereas in most other organisations management may get away with developing and laying out a strategy without too much communication with its shareholders, this is not the case in co-operatives, where shareholders have to be involved in each step of the process. Changes can only be made if a majority of members support the decision to do so (Ferrier 2004). When looking back at the discussion on Community-Based Tourism, it becomes evident at this point that stakeholder engagement and participation is an integral part of the co-operative and thus can be seen as a favourable approach to sustainable development by nature. This ultimate expression of democracy in business (Hill 2000; Kalmi 2013) has the added benefit of increased commitment, shared knowledge and loyalty – all underpinned by an economic incentive (Birchall and Ketilson 2009; Majee and Hoyt 2011). Despite this, Hill (2000) points out that they have remained largely absent in textbooks, even though millions participate in this form of business around the world. In regard to the importance co-operatives play in some sectors, such as agriculture, he finds this hugely unsatisfactory and emphasises the economic incentive co-operatives can bring with productivity being higher in profit-sharing organisations than in investor-centred companies (Hill 2000).

Co-operatives are primarily designed to meet their members' needs. While they cannot be considered philanthropic organisations as such, concern for community is nevertheless an integral part of their philosophy (Birchall 2004). Overall, they can be seen as a more holistic solution to improving society with the aim to benefit the whole organisation rather than an individual. Through this, benefits are achieved for the biggest number of people, while at the same time improving services to its members and consumers through a set of democratically agreed social objectives (Birchall 1997; Youd-Thomas 2005). Co-operatives put one of the three main stakeholders found in ordinary business – producers, employees and consumers – at the centre of its operations in the form of consumer co-operatives, producer co-operatives or worker co-operatives (Bodini 2012). Exceptions are financial co-operatives, whose members can be private consumers as well as producers, such as farmers (Birchall and Ketilson 2009).

2.7 Co-operatives and Sustainable Rural Development

Achieving sustainable development can be addressed in a variety of ways. For most governments and NGOs sustainable development is at the heart of their development activities, and for many rural areas of developing countries this includes poverty alleviation. The importance of local participation that have democratic and people centred strategies at heart is well understood in community development theory (Majee and Hoyt 2011). So one may ask if, and how, co-operatives have comparative advantage over other types of business to enable low-income people to become part of the "socio-economic mainstream" (Majee and Hoyt 2011, p.48) and in achieving sustainability. While the comparative advantage of co-operatives towards sustainable rural development outlined below holds true in a wide variety of contexts, here, the discussion mainly focuses on a developing country context. Paradoxically, the first example used comes from Finland.

In a study carried out by Kalmi (2013), the hypothesis was tested and supported, that co-operative formation is higher in depressed economic conditions and in regions with high unemployment. In contrast, when growth is high and unemployment is low, conventional firm formations are higher. This relates to the 'push' and 'pull' hypothesis of unemployment, in which workers are motivated, or pushed, to set up businesses, because their employment prospects in the labour market are low (Storey 1991); however, at the same time, low-demand conditions may also reduce incentive to set up firms (Kalmi 2013). Still, in economically depressed conditions, finance is not usually readily available to individuals, whilst the risk of economic failure is also high. Co-operatives can be seen as vehicles for mobilising local resources for community development (Majee and Hoyt 2011) and in this regard, forming co-operatives should be considered a favourable approach, as finances can be combined and hence individuals reduce their risk by sharing it with others (Kalmi 2013). This helps people to work for communal as well as personal benefit and can collectively contribute towards the well-being of

a community as a whole through shared internal resources as well as gaining access to external resources (Majee and Hoyt 2011).

As noted before, these statements do not specifically relate to developing countries. But one may argue that they would translate into such a context too and indicate a real opportunity for development. Many workers in the world have little choice in which kind of job they will carry out, most commonly in the informal sector (Smith and Ross 2006). Where labour employment prospects are low, as in the case of many rural areas of developing countries, people have to become creative in generating income opportunities and there is consensus among international agencies such as the UN and ILO that co-operatives are the kind of organization suitable to address all aspects of poverty. If co-operatives align with the principles of the ICA, they have great potential to have a positive effect on many aspects of people's lives, such as improving their economic situation, strengthening communities and improving communication between different groups of people (ICA 2010). This is due to a number of factors, which become most clear when looking at the main obstacles, which keep people from improving their livelihoods and raise themselves out of poverty. This requires a short discussion of terminology.

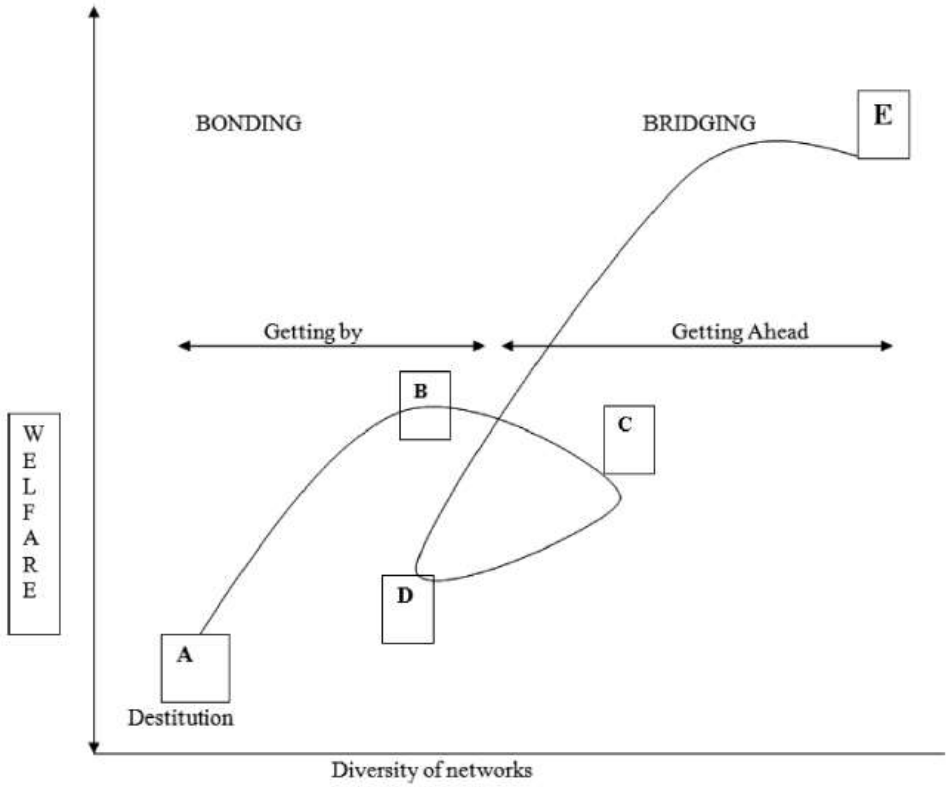
2.7.1 Co-operatives and Poverty Alleviation

When looking up the term 'poverty', the Oxford English Dictionary (2012) offers little insight: Poverty – *"the state of being extremely poor"*. The World Bank (2012) definition helps in quantifying the term by setting the monetary line for poverty as living below a $1.25 a day. However, poverty can also be defined by a variety of other indicators, such as deficient social relations, insecurity, low self-esteem and powerlessness (Coudouel et al. 2004), which can act as barriers in improving ones economic situation in the first place. Poverty can also be expressed in lack of choice, distinctively so in regard to employment opportunities (Smith and Ross 2006). In this regard, Wanayama, Develtere and Pollet (2008) point out the lack of access to assets as an additional factor and the main obstacle

for this is a general lack of organization. Whereas traditional rural societies, in this case in Africa, form natural support structures and rely on mutual aid in times of difficulties, these bonds are not strong enough to withstand serious crises (Wanyama, Develtere, and Pollet 2008). Smith (2007) points to the importance of enabling people in developing countries to raise their income in the first place to a level that provides alternatives to child labour and keeps farmers from overusing their land, which leads to degradation of the natural environment and hence creates further problems (Smith 2007).

Although co-operatives were not designed for poverty alleviation as such, the business model is ethical in nature and the co-operative principles are much in line with the concept of sustainable development. It can therefore help in empowering those who have little ability to improve their socio-economic situation on their own and struggle to raise themselves out of poverty as a group of people (Birchall 2004). This is further exemplified in Figure 2.2 – The Social Capital and Poverty Transition Model. The model explains how groups of people can collectively better their well-being through horizontal 'bonding' capital within their community (a), where friends and family can be relied on in times of crisis. This enables people to get by or even temporarily improve their situation (Holzmann and Jorgensen 1999); however, economic benefits for the group are soon exhausted (b) and with continuing expansion resources become overwhelmed (c). Therefore, the ability to get ahead through 'bridging' social capital is limited (Narayan and Pritchett 1999), hence stopping people to make real progress and achieve significant improvement in their quality of life, or lift a whole group of people out of poverty (Woolcock and Narayan 2000).

Figure 2.2 – The Social Capital and Poverty Transitions Model



(Woolcock and Narayan 2000)

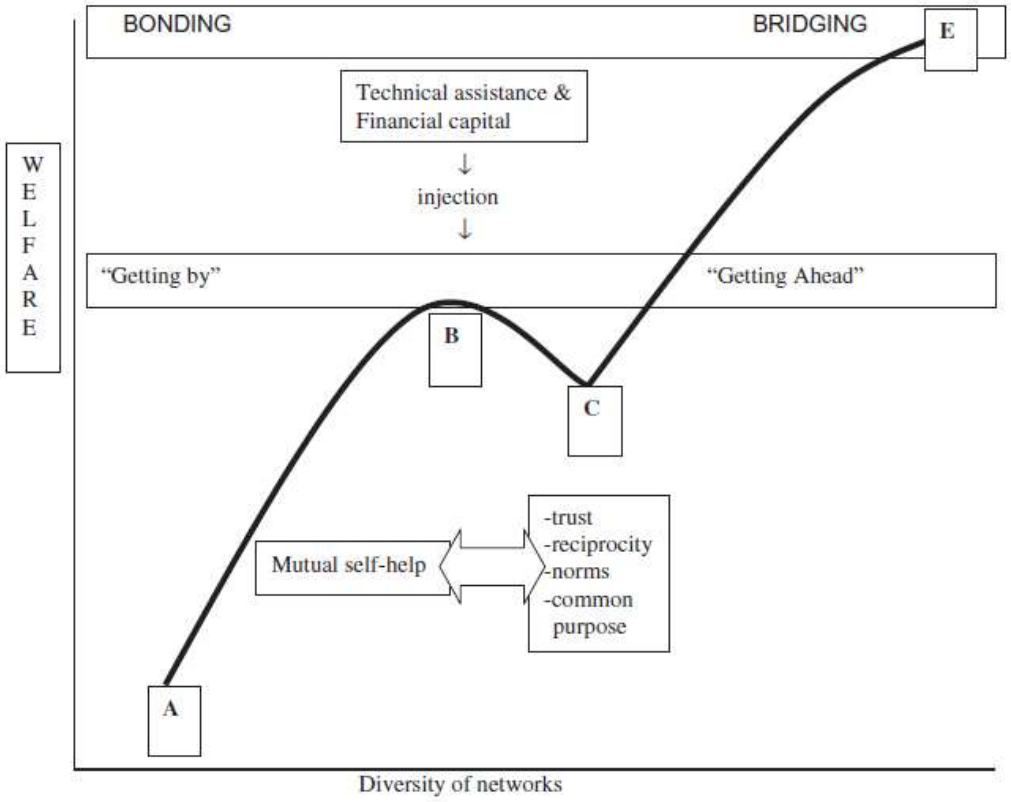
Where social capital is low, thus stopping a community to get ahead, individuals may look for more promising opportunities (bridging capital) elsewhere by breaking ties with their immediate community (d), expressed most dramatically in migration away from the villages (e) to urban areas (Woolcock and Narayan 2000).

This emphasises the need to improve the diversity of a community's social network in order to increase the 'bridging social capital', which is integral to creating opportunities to access resources of other networks (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). In this regard, co-operatives can act as 'mediating agencies', because they have significant potential to improve social, human and economic

capital as solidarity mechanisms that support the traditional mutual support systems (Wanyama, Develtere and Pollet 2008).

Majee and Hoyt's (2011) adaptation of the model (see Figure 2.3 below) shows more explicitly the role co-operatives can play in achieving this goal, calling them a "first choice model for development" (Majee and Hoyt 2011, p.59) with more potential than any other business structure.

Figure 2.3 – Cooperatives and the creation of social capital for socio-economic enhancement



(Majee and Hoyt 2011)

This 'co-operative social capital creation model' explains the potential benefits of applying a co-operative business model to community development. Creating

such aforementioned bridges is difficult for groups of people, often because of lack of diversity in their networks and because they lack common goals, hence only individuals are able to get ahead (as shown in points d and e in Figure 2.2). Co-operatives, however, share a common goal by definition. They are furthermore businesses that provide goods and services for the whole community and by the whole community, minimising the risk of resources becoming overstretched (c). Most importantly, they can advance networking with other businesses and agencies outside their own community, which share similar products or services, where further bonds are created. As co-operatives operate under an open-membership policy, no one in the community should need to be excluded, hence, they promote horizontal bonding, as well as enabling the group to connect with outside resources – 'bridging social capital' (Majee and Hoyt 2011).

A further significant advantage of co-operatives in poverty alleviation is that individual risks become shared risks, as mentioned before (Wanyama, Develtere and Pollet 2008). But beyond sharing risks, co-operatives also operate in a risk-averse manner by nature, because they are focused on its members' needs rather than creating profit alone (ILO 2004). This became especially evident during the global economic crises; the banking crisis and resulting economic recession. The economic crisis has had a negative impact on almost all industries and enterprises. Co-operative financial institutions as well as consumer co-operatives, however, were largely able to remain financially stable, and hardly any co-operative had to ask for government help or bailout (Birchall and Ketilson 2009). Birchall and Simmons (2008) further believe that the member-owned nature of co-operatives puts them at advantage as it creates loyalty, commitment and shared knowledge among its members. As co-operatives teach people to work together and learn how to trust each other, this strengthens community identity as well as confidence in the individual (Majee and Hoyt 2011). These are additional reasons why co-operatives can be of advantage for local economic development strategies, as all of the above increase people's ability for self-help and ideally also empower marginalised and disadvantaged groups, such as women (Birchall 2005; FAO 2004; Green and Marcone 2010; Sati and Juyal 2008). As profits are distributed

among its members, a strong economic incentive exits, because the results are in accordance to people's efforts (Simmons and Birchall 2008; Stettner 1965). However, this is only the case where member's needs are aligned with the co-operative's goals and where they are not, these advantages quickly turn into disadvantages in form of cynicism and lack of participation (Simmons and Birchall 2008).

What makes co-operatives a truly sustainable business approach, especially for developing countries, is also the need for relatively low initial investment and through mutual support and loyalty among members it gives them the tools to help themselves and carry on with their activities once external support withdraws (ILO 2001; Birchall 2003).

2.8 Co-operatives in Developing Countries

Co-operatives were promoted in developing countries from the 1950s onwards in an attempt to modernise traditional economies, often by nationalist government involvement and politicians with personal interest in economic returns. Even though enormous resources have been invested in the development of co-operatives in developing countries, many have failed (Simmons and Birchall 2008). This was mainly due to the top-down approach, where co-operatives were not really autonomous associations, but government led (ibid). Because of too much government interference, the autonomous character of co-operatives was weakened (Parnell 2001; Armbruster 2007), which distorted their original purpose and made them male dominated with middle-income people benefiting much more than the poor (Simmons and Birchall 2008). Consequently, this led to a high failure rate of co-operatives in developing countries and in some cases a bad reputation (Armbruster 2007; Simmons and Birchall 2008). For this reason, today synonyms are often being used, such as 'self-help' groups (Birchall 2005). However, where co-operatives were indeed autonomous and practicing under the ICA's principles, such as in dairy co-operatives in India or Bangladesh, they were successful and Birchall and Simmons (2008) believe more should be done to

identify and learn from such success stories. Roesner (2000) agrees that, looking back, a lot of the expectations put in co-operatives and ideas of self-help in a developing country context have not been met. In some cases to the extent that the initial euphoria has been replaced by scepticism and the neglect of the model altogether and hence, an underestimation of the true potential it has for sustainable development (Roesner 2000). However, where co-operatives were given autonomy and able to make use of participatory development methods, they have been effectively contributing to social development and reaching the poor (Verma 2005a; Simmons and Birchall 2008). Birchall and Simmons (2008) and Smith and Ross (2006) point out that co-operatives differ drastically in form and size and the political and historical background of a country can additionally influence how these operate. This must be taken into account when looking at the co-operative as a model for sustainable development and the difficulties in determining its strengths and weaknesses. Nonetheless, today co-operatives are seen as an effective and practical model to teach self-help and solidarity and overcome many of the socio-economic problems in developing countries (Stettner 1965; Birchall 2004; Youd-Thomas 2005; Armbruster 2007; Chakrabarty and Gosh 2009). Furthermore, they can be of advantage for local economic development strategies, increase self-help potential and empower marginalised and disadvantaged groups, such as women (Birchall 2005; Green and Marcone 2010). Former UN-secretary Kofi Annan stated in 2003 that

> "co-operative enterprises provide the organisational means whereby a significant proportion of humanity is able to take in its own hands the task of creating productive employment, overcoming poverty and achieving social integration" (cited in Youd-Thomas, 2005, p. 52).

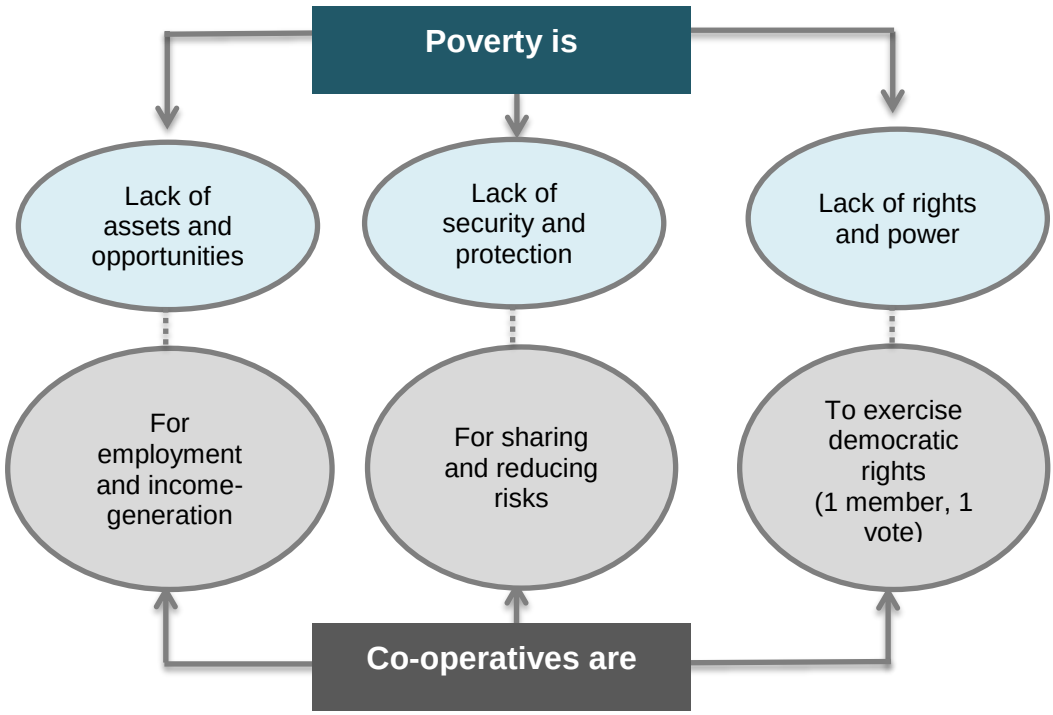
An issue repeatedly addressed in the development debate is gender equality (Hamberg et al. 1994; Srinivasan 1997; Scheyvens and Leslie 2001; FAO 2004; Mehta 2008; Sati and Juyal 2008; Green and Marcone 2010). Green and Marcone (2010) believe that this is a fundamental part of the socio-economic well-being of

society and is an important factor in global development and the debate on global sustainable development can hence not be continued without taking the role of women into account more (Birchall 2005; NCUI 2008; Green and Marcone 2010). Rural women produce more than 50% of the global food production, but only own 2% of land and only receive 1% of all agricultural credit, and are still disadvantaged and not given appropriate acknowledgement as the main actors in rural development (Green and Marcone 2010). Constraints are put on women due to cultural as well as political constraints as they have limited or no access to financial or natural resources (Sati and Juyal 2008). Women also make up two thirds of illiterate people (Green and Marcone 2010). In this regard too, the co-operative offers a viable business model that can help empower women from bottom-up, for example through open membership.

Irrespective of gender or other factors, co-operatives can play a vital role in rural development by bringing together a group of people who organise themselves to help each other for collective and individual benefit (Chakrabarty and Gosh 2009). Furthermore, it adds to the welfare of a rural community as a whole (AusAid 2000; Majee and Hoyt 2011). In addition, Valsamma (2005) claims, that no other agency has been as effective as the co-operative in relieving people from the traps of moneylenders. However, there is a lack of integration of credit with farm services and much more effort is needed in this regard to convert small farmers into economically viable units. Again, co-operatives could and do play a vital role in this by enhancing the standard of living in a multi-dimensional way, acting as "a lifeboat of rural living" (Chakrabarty and Ghosh, 2009, p.210). Birchall (2004), however, points out that co-operatives need more support from government and should be given the opportunity to more actively participate in development processes, especially in regard to economic development and co-operatives potential to contribute to the MDGs (Birchall 2004; Polat 2005). An enabling policy environment for co-operatives could help in achieving this (Polat 2005).

In a large scale study of co-operatives in Sri Lanka and Tanzania (carried out by Birchall and Simmons 2009) several obstacles and disadvantages were identified and acknowledged by its members. These were lack of skills, lack of marketing support and lack of access to finance. The last point in particular is repeatedly brought up in literature (Polat 2005; Jones 2008; NCUI 2008). Chakrabarty and Gosh (2009) also mention lack of marketing opportunities as a key problem for co-operatives, as well as access to material and technical skills. They add that illiteracy in rural areas also needs to be further addressed, as well as the inclusion of marginalised groups. Other initial difficulties for development in developing countries is poverty, lack of access to markets and services, and structural difficulties (Armbruster 2007). Armbruster (2007) further differentiates between exogenous and endogenous factors in determining factors for successful co-operatives. Exogenous factors include: a stable political situation; the right and freedom for private cooperation; and legal frameworks allowing co-operation. Endogenous factors are: willingness among members for self-help; the ability among members for self-help or in other words, sustainable entrepreneurial focus; sufficient governance structures; and improvement of initial outset of co-operative structures (Armbruster 2007). In a simplified way, these different challenges can perhaps be grouped as portrayed in Figure 2.4 by Polat (2005), which also shows effectively why co-operatives can be considered a powerful business model for development.

Figure 2.4 – Co-operative Approach to Poverty



(Polat 2005)

According to Barke and Eden (2001) there are three key areas for a successful co-operative: the members need to know and trust each other to work for a shared goal; the co-operative needs to have clearly defined aims that are understood by everyone; and a business plan is in place considering necessary resources and with realistic detail. However, small co-operatives may be less motivated by a co-operative ideology than the prospects of job creation, or to secure easier access to support agencies (Mellor, Stirling, and Hannah 1988). They can be classified as 'participative' co-operatives rather than 'ideological' co-operatives, which may even sacrifice profitability in order to stay fully committed to the principle of co-operation (Mellor, Stirling and Hannah 1988). However, overall, members need to portray enough ideological commitment to work together within capitalist economies (Barke and Eden 2001). Barke and Eden (2001) point out the fundamental distinction as the collective versus an individualist position. The

latter represents the view that success is more likely if the individual members have a direct financial interest in the co-operative, i.e. through personal capital investment. It can be criticised for potentially creating small capitalists within the group and also be under strain when individuals want to withdraw the investment or become reluctant to reinvest profits into the business (Barke and Eden 2001). Majee and Hoyt (2011) also draw attention to this and the considerable amount of commitment being part of a co-operatives takes. Some members may join "just to test the water; others make cooperative leaps of faith" (Majee and Hoyt 2011, p.57). A real threat to newly formed co-operatives is the wait for return on their investments, which, however, requires patience and willingness for financial sacrifice until the co-operative is operational and generates income (Majee and Hoyt 2011; Novkovic 2008).

Despite some of the challenges presented above, Simmons and Birchall (2009) believe that co-operatives can play their part in reducing poverty and working towards the MDGs. At the same time, a wider environment that guarantees peace, good governance and fair terms of trade is required. Furthermore, co-operatives need a stronger voice in policy making (Huff, Dewit, and Oughton 2001; ILO 2001) and stronger business relationships with other co-operatives to share risks and diversify their products (Birchall and Simmons 2009). This could be done with the help of donor agencies; however, attention needs to be paid to genuinely helping rather than imposing values on its members. NGOs for instance are prone to make the same mistake as government and fail to give 'their' co-operative full autonomy (Parnell 2001). Governments also need to improve their relationships with co-operatives, especially by making funds available for loans, as well as addressing physical constraints by improving roads and legal constraints that cut down bureaucracy and allow cross-border trade. In general, more co-operation between co-operatives, meaning stronger and equal business partnerships between co-operatives in the North and the South based on fair trade need to be established (Birchall and Simmons 2009)

2.9 Co-operative Tourism

This research is looking at a co-operative tourism approach to rural development. Co-operatives as a business model are not new in any sense. They are present in a vast variety of forms and a vast number of countries, and have proven to be an effective tool for poverty alleviation in developing countries as outlined above; however, have not been utilised for tourism much (Paramasvaran, 2008). Few other models have the potential to raise a whole group of people out of poverty as effectively as co-operatives. However, as previously discussed, co-operatives face significant structural difficulties. In regard to tourism co-operatives, there is almost no organised data, which could help in understanding what these difficulties are and how they may be overcome. Overall, they seem to have been overlooked in the academic discourse on tourism as a development tool, and little research of tourism co-operatives exists altogether. While Hill (2000) lamented the absence of co-operatives in economics textbooks in 'The Case of the Missing Organizations: Co-operatives and the Textbooks', perhaps this lament should be extended into a tourism context. Whereas individual success stories seem to exist, few academic attempts have addressed the phenomena. A rigorous perusal of academic databases in the area of co-operative tourism produces but a small number of authors. Similarly, a general internet search produces little to help in its conceptualisation. For example, within the ICA a sectorial organisation for tourism exists – the International Association of Tourism Co-operatives (hereafter TICA) – which was founded in 1976. However, even here an internet search will reveal a distinct lack of activity and an inactive web domain.

At the same time, the many negative impacts and cases of malpractice in the tourism industry have led to a growth in responsible tourism movements, which put communities at the centre of its activities (Mehta 2008), as also discussed in the previous chapter. When recalling the lack of practical applications, co-operatives appear to be a promising business model for a number of reasons. For instance, the principles of responsible tourism and sustainable development are very much in line with co-operative principles. Co-operative tourism in a

developing country context could also be seen to align with the principles of pro-poor tourism (PPT) which seeks to promote business opportunities for the poor and to increase the collective economic benefit of tourism (Fennell 2006). Especially the participatory democratic nature in decision making processes is a key overlapping value. Co-operative tourism hence takes a bottom-up approach to tourism development, ensuring that benefits go back to those who put in the work. Mehta (2008) outlines the co-operative advantage for tourism as a philosophy of right attitudes that has been proven to work well at a primary level and allows fair distribution of profits and contributes to economic development. Furthermore, it comes with the advantage of being low in initial investment (Paramasvaran 2008). Verma (2005b) goes as far as saying that co-operatives and NGOs are the best agencies to promote rural tourism and strongly recommends that co-operative tourism should be promoted more in regard to its the potential to contribute to sustainable rural development. Furthermore, because co-operatives are embedded in their communities, they keep investment where they are placed, which has a significant impact on communities by improving economic solidarity (Davolio 2006). Co-operative tourism hence has potential to contribute to economic community-based development in less developed countries (Aref and Sarjit 2009).

In 2008, the 'International Conference on Co-operative Tourism' was held in India (ICA 2008), of which the proceedings called for the following: A unified goal of promoting tourism through co-operatives; the institutionalisation of tourism development through co-operatives; supply and demand standards to be set for co-operative tourism; guidelines and certification to be considered; and a model project need to be identified that portray best practice (ICA 2008). To the researcher's knowledge this call remains largely unanswered. However, others also share the opinion that empirical research is needed regarding alternative forms of tourism, in particular co-operative tourism, with the potential to move on the sustainable tourism development debate in a more effective way than corporate tourism has been able to achieve (Timothy 1998; Verma 2005a; Salazar 2006).

The ICA (2010) and Verma (2005b) believe, that co-operatives have been going through a 'renaissance' of interest in this model of enterprise for a variety of sectors, including tourism. Davolio (2006), chairman of the aforementioned TICA, outlines how the co-operative business model has adapted to people's needs, and, whereas it started out as enabling consumers to buy goods at fair prices, co-operatives then started diversifying into health care and other areas of life. He believes that now farmers, fishermen and many others could also diversify and expand their activities into tourism (Davolio 2008). Mehta (2008) adds that within the tourism sector a wide variety of business ventures, such as transport and accommodation providers, tour guides and other service providers would lend themselves to forming co-operatives. The co-operative business model has already proven to be successful in other industries in India, such as the dairy industry. Verma (2005b) believes that it could act as a catalyst for development in rural areas in the form of alternative, pro-poor tourism that involves community-based initiatives. As addressed previously, he also argues that the importance of participatory-, people- and community-based organisations like co-operatives in promoting sustainable tourism have to be more strongly recognized (Verma 2005a; Paramasvaran 2008).

While academic discourse on the topic is scarce, there is some evidence of the existence of tourism co-operatives. The most prevalent examples of these are co-operative consortiums, in which businesses retain their individual brands, but pool some resources together for a common goal, most notably for marketing purposes (for example the Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative (AITC)[1] and Glasgow's Merchant City Tourism & Marketing Co-operative[2] in the UK or the Alleppey tourism development cooperative made up of house boat owners in Kerala, India[3]). Joint promotion activities are the most successful outcomes of co-operation in this regard (Palmer, Barrett, and Ponsonby 2000; Gorman 2005; Hanqin, York, and Kenny 2009), followed by the development of tourism

[1] www.exploreargyll.co.uk/join.php
[2] www.merchantcityglasgow.com
[3] www.atdcalleppey.com/profile.html

resources and the coordination of tourism administration and communication in times of crisis (Hanqin, York and Kenny 2009). Education and management of human resources was also valued highly (Hanqin, York and Kenny 2009). Again, lack of documentation on these limits what can be learned from them.

Another important aspect is the potential role tourism co-operatives could play in providing employment to young people in rural areas, who are disinclined to work in agriculture and are migrating to the cities (Mohamad and Hanzah 2013; Patra and Agasty 2013). Tourism, however is seen as a much more rewarding form of employment, through which they can learn about different cultures and improve their English (Mahamad and Hamzah 2013).

Barke and Eden (2001) carried out research among 17 tourism co-operatives in Andalusia, Spain and found a variety of structural and fundamental difficulties amongst them, with the majority not fulfilling the co-operative ideal at all. Overall, they struggled with the seasonal nature of tourism. The only co-operative coming closest to the 'ideal' type of co-operative, also came with the significant advantage of tourism being a secondary activity for its members and hence being less dependent on the seasonality of the industry. For this reason, Barke and Eden (2001) question if the co-operative is indeed an appropriate business model for tourism. Furthermore, they argue that in the Spanish context, for which tourism is a major industry and which has the second highest number of co-operatives in Europe, their absence in the tourism industry speaks for itself. However, they acknowledge potential for co-operative tourism as a way of diversification. This is also expressed by Mohamad and Hamzah (2013), who conducted a case study on a community co-operative in Batu Puteh, Malaysia. Here, an over-dependency on either farming or tourism was becoming evident among some members of the co-operative, hence the authors emphasize the importance of diversifying their product portfolios. However, they found that community co-operatives can be successful if they fulfil certain pre-requisites, such as a sound business plan, strong commitment from locals, product diversification and an enabling external

environment. At the same time the slow adoption of the model in Malaysia indicates a lack of support from communities as well as the authorities (Mahamad and Hamzah 2013).

In regard to rural development, as previously discussed, agriculture has much potential to diversify into hospitality, for example in the form of agritourism (Roberts and Hall 2001). Davolio (2006) believes that co-operatives could actively contribute to social development and strengthen the cultural identity of a community in this context. Emphasis could be put on local produce and local customs with an orientation on ecotourism and providing tourists with nature based and cultural holidays engaging in authentic traditions and experiencing the culture of a place in form or arts or food, for example (Davolio 2008). Timothy (1998) also emphasizes co-operation as critical for tourism development in developing countries. He puts forward a formative model to tourism planning in Indonesia, however implies that it may be applicable to other developing countries with similar conditions. These principles are: cooperation between government agencies and the various administrative levels of government; cooperation between same-level autonomous polities and; cooperation between public and private sectors (Timothy 1998).

2.9.1 Co-operative Tourism in India

The co-operative has proven to be successful in many countries, but particularly so in India, where a huge co-operative sector has emerged (Patra and Agasty 2013) through government support and World Bank loans of over $500 million (Birchall and Simmons 2004). In India the co-operative movement started in 1904 and made rapid improvements in all socio-economic activities. Today more than 500,000 co-operative societies exist in India and some have become true success stories for co-operatives such as the dairy industry as a whole and fertilizer companies (Verma 2005b), with the agricultural sector being the most successful type of co-operative (Birchall and Ketilson 2009). Furthermore, they have been a

real asset in employment generation, with around 15.5 million people being employed in and 14.4 million being self-employed in the co-operative sector.

The Indian government has identified rural tourism as one of the key development areas and the importance of community participation in this. It has allocated 6-7% of its budgetary expenditure to these (IFAD 2011) and aims to improve basic services for the poor through elementary education, health services and rural roads (World Bank 2012).

Verma (2005b) points out the strong community and democracy ethos of India, and how community-based activities have been effective in addressing socio-economic problems in other scenarios. He believes that community-based organizations, such as co-operatives can promote sustainability, contribute to job creation and poverty alleviation. In this regard co-operatives have a comparative advantage over other forms of business to promote sustainable development as they are embedded in the culture of rural India already and hence have big potential of becoming part of the tourism industry and fulfilling tourist's needs for experiencing authentic lifestyles and cultures, especially from an international tourist perspective. Tourism is growing and seen as an effective tool of addressing some of the problems within India such as poverty or unemployment and the industry is gaining support from public and private bodies (Verma 2005b). Co-operatives offer real alternatives to people to escape from moneylenders and can provide credit (Valsamma 2005).

As established previously, India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world (Sarkar and George 2010) and tourism, one of the biggest and fastest industries in the world (Malley 2002; UNWTO 2010) is one of the emerging economies within India. Verma (2005b) points out India's emergence as a global power with strong economics and a favourable climate for investment. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that India still has problems with poverty, social inequalities, unemployment and environmental degradation (Verma 2005b).

When looking at the scope of growth in India, sustainable development practices become indispensable. Furthermore, developing rural areas and the diversification of the agricultural sector are key in achieving this. Hence, the co-operative as a business approach that has potential to encompass all three factors should be paid special attention to.

2.10 Conclusion

The previous chapters have outlined the importance of sustainable development on a global level, and in this regard pointed to the importance of including rural areas in development strategies. Tourism was discussed as an effective way of achieving this, while highlighting the substantial negative impacts this can create. Furthermore, the challenges communities can face in regard to becoming active participants in tourism development was equally emphasized. It was argued that community involvement can help in lessening the negative impacts, while at the same time pointing out the lack of practical strategies. Co-operatives were put forward as an effective business model in this regard, suggesting that they are highly complementary to sustainable development principles and resilient to crisis, while also drawing attention to the clear lack of research in a tourism context. The following chapter, Methodology and Methods, will delineate how this research aims to contribute to filling this gap in knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

3 Introduction

The preceding chapters have outlined the different issues regarding rural tourism development and the role co-operatives may play in them. Theory strongly suggests that co-operatives have significant potential in advancing sustainable tourism development in rural areas of India. However, there is a distinct lack of academic discourse on the topic. Questions about how these rural communities feel about such an approach and whether it fits in with their needs and abilities remain unanswered. This chapter will outline the methods and methodology adopted to shed light on these questions, to establish a thorough understanding of the situation and to achieve truthful results that will encourage further research and interest in the topic, also through the systematic investigation of alternative approaches, as suggested by Clough and Nutbrown (2008). Firstly, the research area and question will be reviewed, followed by an outline of the aim and objectives. Then the different methodological options will be discussed, followed by the specific research methods adopted.

3.1 Problem Area and Defining the Research Question

Several studies have been conducted in the area of co-operatives and rural development (Stettner 1965; Philipp 1966; Holmen 1985; Birchall 1997; Barke and Eden 2001; Birchall 2003; Birchall 2004; Simmons and Birchall 2008; Birchall and Ketilson 2009; Birchall and Simmons 2009; Chakrabarty and Gosh 2009; Shaikh 2010; Kalmi 2013). Many of these were based on quantitative surveys with members of existing co-operatives in a variety of sectors and aimed at determining how effective co-operatives are in poverty alleviation. This thesis is strongly guided by review of these studies, which demonstrate that co-operatives have an advantage over other business types in regard to member loyalty, shared knowledge as well as an economic advantage (Birchall and Simmons 2009). Tourism co-operatives, however, are largely absent from the

literature. Where they are represented, they are mainly discussed in the context of joint marketing activities, which also forms part of the co-operatives under investigation in this study, but do not extend beyond this. No explicit study has been identified which looks at tourism co-operatives in the sense of a group of people setting out to develop an entire tourism product together, i.e. delivering a wide variety of services, such as transport, accommodation, food, guides and marketing. Consequently, the potential of such an undertaking in the wider rural development discourse is untapped, and what motivates individuals in the communities to take part in the early stages of setting up a co-operative remains unexplored. By looking at what clearly appears to be an under-researched area, the findings are expected to elucidate what role tourism co-operatives may play in developing new rural destinations sustainably, taking a stakeholder approach with focus on understanding people's perceptions and opinions. This is important when engaging in sustainable tourism [see for example Freeman (1984) or Byrd (2007)]. Therefore, when trying to establish a new way of looking at a concept, as is the case with the study presented here, the researcher believes this is an important first step in establishing a sturdy base upon which the broader concept of co-operative tourism can be built.

More specifically, this research aims to investigate the potential of a co-operative approach to tourism in rural areas of India that are not part of the 'honeypot' tourist spots and, generally speaking, have not been able to benefit from the significant economic growth the country is experiencing. This investigation aims to develop an understanding of the challenges commonly faced by these rural communities, and to establish if tourism is a suitable approach in addressing these in the first place. Furthermore, motivations to form co-operatives in this context are explored and what distinctive advantages are associated with this. At the same time, shortcomings of the approach are identified.

3.2 Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this research is:

> To explore the nature of co-operative tourism and its potential towards sustainable rural tourism development in India from a stakeholder perspective.

The following objectives were set to support the research aim:

Objective 1

> *To develop an understanding of the current life situation of selected rural communities, the specific nature of strengths and challenges within these and the implications that can be drawn from this*

Objective 2

> *To ascertain if tourism can be seen as a viable development tool to address the challenges of these rural communities*

Objective 3

> *To identify perceptions of and motivations towards forming tourism co-operatives and to outline the distinctive attributes associated with adopting a co-operative approach to tourism.*

Objective 4

> *To gain an understanding of the practical implications of a co-operative approach to tourism.*

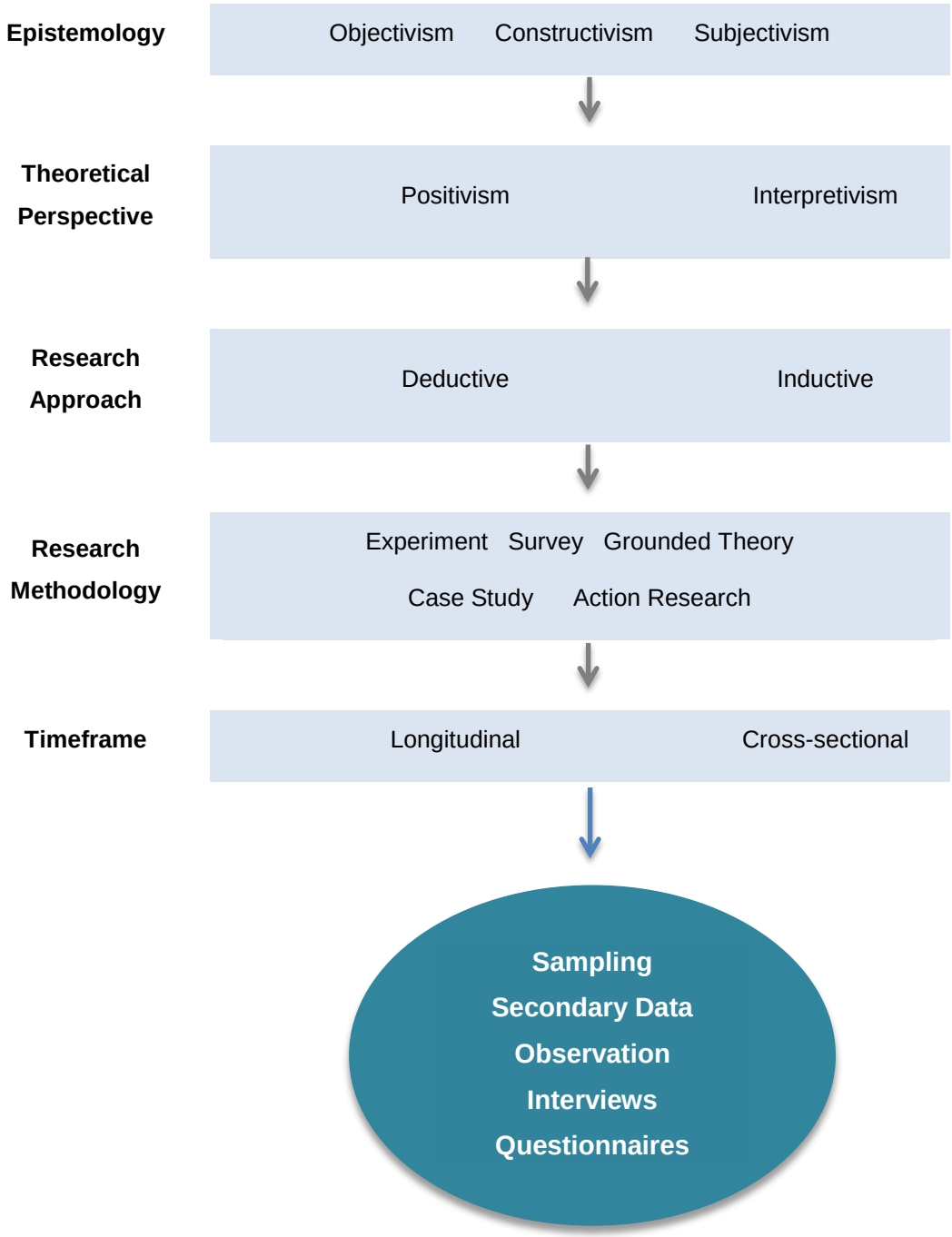
Objective 5

To outline the overall strengths and weaknesses of a co-operative tourism approach in the context of the IDF project, and consider its suitability for a framework towards sustainable development in rural India.

3.3 Defining the Research Paradigms

To put the research in context, a discussion of paradigm is required. A paradigm can be defined as a conceptual and philosophical framework, a set of principles and beliefs, or a theoretical perspective, which define the way researchers view the world (Kuhn 1962; Phillimore and Goodson 2004). It shapes a researcher's approach to organized research and informs the entire research process in order to advance understanding of an issue (Kuhn 1962). Researchers must chose between a wide variety of methodological approaches available in order to make an area of interest researchable. The type of problem, but also the resources available will play a part in this. Perhaps more importantly, the researcher faces a philosophical choice (Gill and Johnson 2002) which will influence research design, inform decision-making and form the basis of the entire research framework (Hughes and Sharrock 1997) as portrayed in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 – The "Research Onion"



Adapted from Saunders et al. (2009)

The research paradigms are determined by the researcher's epistemological and ontological stance. This in turn determines the theoretical perspective a researcher will take, the research approach and furthermore presents a number of methodological choices. These components will be discussed below and applied to this particular study by discussing how the researcher's philosophical position and the nature of the research question have influenced the choices made in the research design.

3.3.1 Epistemology and Ontology and a Discussion of Perspective

Epistemology is the study of knowledge, how knowledge is constructed and what can be claimed as 'knowledge' in the first place (Tribe 2004). Ontology is the study of reality and being and how reality can be defined. It asks the question what can be known about reality and what claims can be made about social reality (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). The epistemological and ontological principles hence deal with the construction of knowledge and reality (Flick 2009) and are closely interlinked, one influencing the other. Botterill (2001) argues that taking a position on one's epistemological stance is a central step in making legitimate claims on knowledge in tourism research (Botterill 2001). A researcher's epistemological and ontological positioning is therefore directly linked to adopting one of the two main research paradigms – a positivist or the interpretivist approach.

Positivism mainly applies to quantitative research and is concerned with seeking answers to the question '*why'* things are, to enable researchers to predict and explain phenomena (Decrop 2004). It prescribes a mainly deductive approach to testing theory and allows for clear analysis of data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe 2002; Bryman and Bell 2007; Denscombe 2007; Babbie 2010). Interpretivism, in contrast, as a general philosophical standpoint is concerned with understanding and interpreting phenomena and emphasises the relationship between the observed and the observer (Decrop 2004; Denzin and Lincoln 2011). It makes claims that a world of meaning has to be interpreted to be understood

(Schwandt 1994). Thus quantitative research mainly takes a positivist approach of one universal reality, which is static and can be captured. Qualitative research in contrast, mainly dealing with subjective experiences, typically takes an interpretive, phenomenological or social constructivist stance of multiple realities (Phillimore and Goodson 2004; Denscombe 2007). Knowledge can therefore be seen as social product of truth valid within norms of communities (Botterill and Platenkamp 2012). Goodman (1978), Schütz (1967) and Berger and Luckmann (1967) further explain this as the world being socially or historically constructed, in which facts are non-existent. Some meanings are experienced and lost, while others become internalised into attitudes and cultural outlook (Husserl 1934-37, in Moran 2000). This implies that individuals do not live in their own worlds of truth, but rather that our realities are shared within groups of people, communities or cultures. Truth and knowledge hold true within this context (Botterill and Platenkamp 2012) and enable us to communicate and live together (Denscombe 2007).

The study presented in this thesis is of a qualitative nature and therefore adopts an interpretivist, or more specifically, a phenomenological perspective of recognising multiple realities. For the reasons stated above, a positivist approach would be entirely unsuitable for tapping into locals' individual experience and interpretation of the tourism co-operatives, as well as in the interpretation of finding. In this regard, the researcher adopts a hermeneutic phenomenologist standpoint, by agreeing that meaning only becomes relevant through the researcher's interpretations and analysis (Laverty 2003), language being the key in this process of understanding (Moran 2000). In social sciences the researcher therefore only interprets what has already been socially constructed by the elements of the research interest from 'a universal context by the activities of our mind' (Schütz 1962, cited in Flick 2009, p.77), hence one could speak of second degree constructions. This is further clarified by Gadamer (1989, p.375):

> "Understanding is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning. Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one's own thinking on the subject".

Moran (2000) and Laverty (2003) discuss the hermeneutical circle in this context, meaning that all questions are influenced by certain assumptions and an individual's background, which predetermine what we, as researchers, can discover in the first place. This poses the dilemma of a closed circle, where the researcher is 'stuck' within her own universe of experience and constructions. Heidegger explains, however, that rather than being closed, the circle involves a certain "relatedness back and forward" (cited in Moran 2000, p. 237) and our questioning can be seen as a light casting a pattern on a phenomenon and fulfilling our expectations, which then allows us to ask more questions and continuously advance our understanding.

This reflects the theoretical position of the researcher for this study. The aim of this project is to develop an understanding of the nature of co-operative tourism and its potential towards sustainable rural development in India from a stakeholder perspective. A theoretical framework has been developed from a literature review, giving the researcher a basic understanding of the key topics under investigation and creating a general picture of issues commonly faced by rural communities of developing countries and how co-operatives may help in this context. Furthermore, the researcher's personal background, knowledge and experience will inevitably have influenced expectations and preconceptions and therefore influenced the interview design to a degree. It is important to recognise this in order to understand the researcher's reasoning for her methodological choices, but also in order to minimise the degree to which this introduces bias at the various stages of the research process.

3.4 Research Approach

As touched upon above, theory building can take the path of preceding data collection, meaning that a theory, assumption or generalisation already exists before data collection – a deductive approach (Gill and Johnson 2002; Greenfield 2002). This is clearly not the aim of this research, as no theory exists that could be tested in this context and overall, little is known about a co-operative approach to sustainable rural tourism development in developing countries. Instead, this study seeks to establish whether the assumptions on co-operative tourism developed through a review of relevant literature align with findings from field work; to learn more about the general nature of tourism co-operatives; and understand what strengths or challenges people may perceive there to be and what this implies in regard to its potential for its suitability as a tool for sustainable rural development. Hence, an inductive approach is implied, through which an understanding of the concept is developed as part of the research process and theory emerges as a result of data collection (Gill and Johnson 2002; Greenfield 2002; Denscombe 2007; Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2009; Sekaran and Bougie 2009). Furthermore, due to the many uncertainties presented in a live project, as well as the uncertainties of working in rural India where plans and schedules can change quickly, a strong exploratory element to data collection was necessary. This called for a flexible structure to data collection, with the researcher being able to adapt and change according to the emerging themes. An inductive approach allowed for this flexibility, unlike a deductive approach with mainly highly prescriptive and structured methods (Denscombe 2007; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009; Sekaran and Bougie 2009), which is believed to have been unsuitable for this particular study.

3.5 Methodology

Methodology is the study of methods and how the researcher can find out about what is known (Flick 2009; Guba and Lincoln 1998), or how knowledge can be collected (Armbruster 2007). Following a positivist deductive research approach with clearly defined and controllable variables has advantages in some regards.

This calls for a contrived research environment, where outside influences can be excluded and a clear causal relationship can be established (Sekaran 2009). In social sciences, however, research does not necessarily aim for theory testing. Hence, artificial or contrived settings would be counterproductive to inductive research concerned with understanding social phenomena or events and theory development. Taking experiments 'out of the lab' and conducting research in the settings in which they naturally occur has therefore become a common approach among social researchers (Gill and Johnson 2002). One approach taking this idea furthest is Grounded Theory, a defining characteristic of it being that it is almost entirely concerned with the experience of a situation in its most natural setting and evolving and emerging through constant reference to its own findings from the field (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Denscombe 2007). Elements of this approach have been adopted, such as the general of idea of 'exploration' and 'open-mindedness' (Denscombe 2007, p. 105), as well as allowing theory to emerge from the data. However, overall a more structured approach has been taken. For example, a literature review influenced the research questions, and findings were then compared to existing theories on sustainable tourism development and co-operatives in order to develop a thorough understanding of the situation and discuss its implications. Furthermore, the time necessary to be spent in the field and the lack of the options for precise planning were of concern.

Within the interpretivist approach a number of paradigms exist, for example phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, realism, hermeneutics or ethnography (Novkovic 2008). While similar in philosophical stance, they are distinctively different in the way they shape the research process, the way data is collected and interpreted. The approach deemed most suitable for this study is phenomenology, and the reasons for this choice are discussed below.

3.5.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is part of the constructivist/ interpretivist paradigm. Defining exactly what would constitute a phenomenological methodology is difficult, the

reason being that "it kept interpreting its own meaning to an extent that makes it impossible to rely on a standard definition for the purpose of historical inclusion or exclusion" (Spiegelberg 1982, p.1). It therefore does not follow a unified methodological approach. However, all approaches share the commonality of being concerned with understanding social phenomena (Halldorsdottir 2000). Phenomenology is closely related to the philosophy of being or 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger 1962) and the conscious experience of this (Moran 2000). It puts emphasis on the world as lived by a person and on their experience of it (Laverty 2003). '*What*' things are is of interest to the researcher (rather than determining *'why'* they are), the meaning of data, and the development of ideas through subjective data, therefore prescribing a mainly inductive approach (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe 2002; Bryman and Bell 2007; Denscombe 2007; Babbie 2010).

Phenomenology was largely developed by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl with his work 'Logische Untersuchungen' (Logical Investigations) in 1900-1901 and is further deeply associated with Martin Heidegger's publication 'Sein und Zeit' (Being and Time) in 1927 and Hans-Georg Gadamer's 'Wahrheit und Methode' (Truth and Method) in 1960. It was developed into a major research perspective for social sciences by the sociologist Alfred Schütz in the 1960s and is now understood as a practice to describe phenomena, and to develop understanding – *Verstehen* – of the true meaning of whatever it is that is being researched or 'experienced', and how human beings make sense of this experience (Schütz 1967; Moran 2000).

For this study, emphasis therefore had to be put on avoiding misconstructions and impositions resulting from the researcher's previous experience. The aim was to let meaning develop from the research itself and for the researcher to describe it as accurately and true to the facts as possible, as stressed by Moran (2000) and Groenewald (2004). An aim of phenomenology is to emancipate oneself from preconceptions and prejudgments as much as possible and to see phenomena with

an innocent mind in order to be able to comprehend something new (Spiegelberg 1982). The real-life world of participants and their experience of this is of interest to the phenomenological researcher and the essential structure of the phenomena under investigation becomes more and more clear through the analysis of data. Here, the researcher needed to be open to themes that emerged, to find out what the individual themes had in common and what was unique to them (Halldorsdottir 2000). According to Ricoeur (1981) and Schwandt (1994) this should go beyond description of what is found, to an interpretation of what is found and giving meaning to it (Ricoeur 1981; Schwandt 1994).

3.6 Alternative Considerations

A different approach that has a similar explorative element to it is Action Research, although it is more about hands-on, practical research that can be applied in the setting where it takes place (Denscombe 2007). The term dates back to Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist in the 1940s, who applied the term to organizational research and the specific needs of organisations that are undergoing change (Gill and Johnson 2002; Ozanne and Saatcioglu 2008). Lewin believed that research in the social sciences should be undertaken to contribute to change and social improvement and by studying things through changing them and then evaluating the effects (Gill and Johnson 2002). The evaluation of findings and applying them before further evaluation and re-application all become part of the process (Denscombe 2007). He furthermore discovered that involving employees of an organization in decision-making processes led to higher productivity (Ozanne and Saatcioglu 2008).

The term ‘action research’ is now widely used by researchers and a variety of sub-approaches exist which can vary considerably, to the degree that Gill and Johnson (2002) think there is no unifying methodology at all. An early definition says it “aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework” (Rapoports 1970, p.499). An

issue with this definition arises from the aspect of collaboration between the researcher and those being researched, especially in regard to the issue of generalisation of knowledge or being too specific about the particular setting (Denscombe 2007; Gill and Johnson 2002).

Adapted action research paradigms that were since considered for this study, as they are somewhat flexible within their methodology, and specifically discuss action research within communities of developing countries, were Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Rapid Situation Analysis (RSA), the latter being the most seriously considered research approach for this study. All three developed out of the biases of brief visits by urban-based professionals to rural areas for data collection (Bhandari 2003; Dunn et al. 1996; Koutra 2010) and the "costs, inaccuracies and delays of large scale questionnaire surveys" (Bhandari 2003, p.9), which created poor understanding of the culture and social context in regard to the problems in people's lives (Dunn et al. 1996).

3.6.1 Rapid Situation Analysis (RSA)

RSA was developed through the limitations of PRA and RRA and offers a hybrid approach of these. It is a bottom-up approach that is concerned with the generation of knowledge from the local community and how this can lead to the most effective way to understand their needs and concerns (Dunn et al. 1996; Koutra 2010). RSA collects data and feeds it back to the community. This way locals are given a chance to understand obstacles to sustainable development (Dunn et al. 1996) rather than the data being for the mere benefit of the researcher. This kind of cross-checking of data also increases credibility and dependability of the research (Denzin and Lincoln 1994).

'Rapid' refers to the approach being economical with the researcher's time, 'situation' depicts the specific setting of the research and 'analysis' refers to the process of identifying the problem area (Koutra 2010). It takes an 'optimal

ignorance' attitude towards data saturation. Whereas PRA and RRA require multi-discipline teams, this is not the case with RSA. It allows a multi-methods approach and use of additional research tools like participant observation and unstructured interviews and furthermore places special emphasis on illiterate and poor people (Koutra 2010). RSA is participatory in nature and seeks the involvement of locals, assuming that they understand problems within their community best. Through this it avoids the bias often occurring in typical rural tourism development approaches (Koutra 2010).

The main aim of RSA is neither to empower people as such nor to simply gather data for policy making. Rather it is aimed at collecting data in order to explain tourism development phenomena (Koutra 2010). RSA is a flexible approach in the sense that it can be combined with other methodological approaches to suit the researcher's needs. Therefore RSA should not be seen as a blueprint for rural tourism development research, but rather as guidance (Koutra 2010).

The researcher believes that the democratic, emancipatory, participative nature of action research (Denscombe 2007) fits in well with the principles of the co-operative itself, which also emphasizes democracy, self-help and empowerment of its members. Furthermore, it is suitable within a phenomenological research approach, and in a way reflects the idea of a hermeneutical circle discussed above. Action research was therefore the initial research approach for this thesis. However, it quickly transpired that this was not a feasible option in its entirety, and this was mainly due to the progress of the IDF project and perhaps an overambitious goal for, at that stage, an inexperienced researcher. At the beginning of the Ph.D. process, the IDF project was in its very early development stages and due to difficulties in the initial set-up of the project with changing participants and timelines, this did not allow for the researcher to work with the same group of people and work through a common action research process with them. Furthermore, the researcher was not directly involved in implementations, which made action research a less realistic option. Nonetheless, the researcher

benefited from being aware of alternative approaches and was able to reflect on limitations better by having internalised the beliefs of this research approach, which could be ideally suited for future projects of a similar nature.

3.7 Methods

Following the discussion of methodological considerations, the specific methods adopted must be discussed. Four main methods of data collection exist in social research; Questionnaires, observations, interviews and document analysis. Although certain research strategies or paradigms commonly adopt a specific method, such as the use of questionnaires in quantitative research, Denscombe (2007) points out that the researcher still has a choice in this and should make a well reflected decision on the most suitable method for their particular study. The methods chosen for this study therefore follow logically from the research problem and the methodological standpoint discussed above.

3.7.1 Data Collection

For this research project semi-structured interviews were believed to be most suitable. The researcher was looking for in-depth understanding of the issue and was concerned with opinions and subjective attitudes, which were unlikely to be determined through questionnaires or pure observation. Structured interviews stick to predetermined questions and pre-coded answers, making standardisation easier and data analysis more efficient (Bryman 2012); however, they are more suitable for large-scale projects looking for specific data from a wide range of participants (Kuhn 1962; Denscombe 2007; Bryman 2012). This was not the case here. Unstructured interviews in contrast assure the highest degree of flexibility in this regard, where the researcher simply dictates the topic of discussion and only interferes minimally while letting the participants develop their own thoughts (Phillimore and Goodson 2004). However, the researcher needed to follow a loose interview structure in order to cover the different aspects of the research problem, such as participants' experience of life in the village, perceptions of tourism or motivations to join the co-operative. Only through this was it possible to develop

an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the different aspects of a co-operative approach to rural tourism development. Hence, the decision was made to conduct semi-structured interviews, which gave the interviews the needed structure, while allowing for a degree of flexibility to vary question and change their sequencing as appropriate to allow new themes to emerge (Tribe 2004).

3.7.1.1 Interview Design

As expressed in the research objectives, the semi-structured interviews set out to develop an understanding of the current life situation of selected rural communities, the specific nature of strengths and challenges within these and to determine what implications could be drawn from this. Furthermore, the interviews aimed to ascertain if tourism can be seen as a viable development tool to address the challenges of these rural communities. One of the main questions to be answered was what motivated members of the co-operatives to take part in this particular project and what we could learn about the distinctive attributes of co-operative tourism through this. Where negative views and challenges of a co-operative tourism approach emerged, the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to probe further, as exemplified below:

Excerpt 1

> *I know the foreign culture. For example, when you come with me, put on the clothes […] cover the body. (C9)*
>
> Researcher: So what would you do if somebody was not [covering up] very much, wearing shorts…?

Correspondingly, positive views and opportunities were highlighted and followed up on. Questions furthermore aimed to determine the willingness and ability of participants for self-help.

Different stakeholder groups were interviewed, such as members of tourism co-operative, as well as members of the wider community who may be affected by tourism activity in the area, such as taxi drivers, hoteliers and shop and restaurant owners. Furthermore, local politicians and academics were interviewed, who are part of the local community, and who were able to provide a slightly different view on some topics, hence assisting in drawing a more comprehensive picture. Participants were encouraged to speak about issues that they felt were most important, although key points identified through a review of relevant literature (see Table 3.1) guided the interview process. These differed slightly depending on the stakeholder group; however, the following questions outline the main themes (see Appendix 5: Interview Questions Wider Community and Appendix 6: Interview Questions Co-operative Members for an overview of questions guiding the interviews).

Table 3.1 – Main Themes

Main Theme	Sub-points
Rural Life	Challenges Strengths Employment opportunities Economic situation Need for diversification Resources – human and natural (Development) needs Barriers
Tourism	Understanding of tourism Experience with tourists Motivation to engage in tourism Attitudes Tourism product (what can the area offer/ what may tourists need) Tourism related development/ training needs
Co-operatives	Motivations to be part of co-operative Expectations in the co-operative Alternatives to the co-operative model Perceptions Attitudes
The IDF Project	General attitudes, expectations and motivations
External Environment	Is the political climate favourable for development Is government in support of co-operatives Can adequate training be provided

The interview started with easy questions about the participants, their life and work in the village to relax the atmosphere as recommended by Denscombe (2007), then covered the broader topics of interest and finished with an opportunity for questions from participants.

Interviews took between 15 minutes and two hours and ended when data saturation had been achieved, i.e. no new data emerged or participants became repetitive. These were audio-recorded and in addition notes were taken. Notes covered details that were not possible to be captured in audio form, such as atmosphere, location or body language and were written up immediately after the interview to avoid bias of memory.

The interviews produced an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of a co-operative tourism approach and highlight key issues that may need to be addressed in future. This allowed for the development of a framework towards rural development in India, and perhaps other developing countries from a stakeholder perspective.

3.7.1.2 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted with three non-native English speakers in Scotland, but who possessed a good level of English. These interviews were aimed at:

- removing coarser errors in question design
- identifying potential misunderstandings
- clarifying ambiguous question
- revealing any other issues that were not anticipated beforehand
- familiarisation with the recording instrument and other equipment

The pilot study revealed minor issues with wording, which were amended accordingly. The researcher recognises that the pilot study took place in a very different socio-cultural environment to the actual setting for data collection. However, a pilot study in India would not have been feasible due to time and financial constraints and hence, with due respect to the limitations of this

approach, there was greater benefit to be gained from the decision to undertake a pilot study than to not conducting one altogether.

3.7.1.3 Field Notes

The researcher kept a diary and took notes on her day to day observations as well as after interviews and while attending IDF project workshops and meetings. In addition, observations and feelings were audio recorded at the end of each day in the field. Groenwald (2004) explains that field notes can act as a type of secondary data storage. He differentiates between observational notes, theoretical notes and methodological notes, of which the first and latter were made by the researcher and which became most relevant when reflecting on limitations (discussed in Chapter 7 – Conclusion) of the study and in confirming memories and feelings during the data analysis process.

Observational notes allowed for cross-checking and comparison between findings from interviews and literature. Literature suggests, for example, that women carry the majority of the workload in the household and farm life (Mehta 2008). Observations were able to act as an indicator to whether or not this held true in the field. Methodological notes helped in reflecting on the researcher herself and in critiquing the quality of the research process.

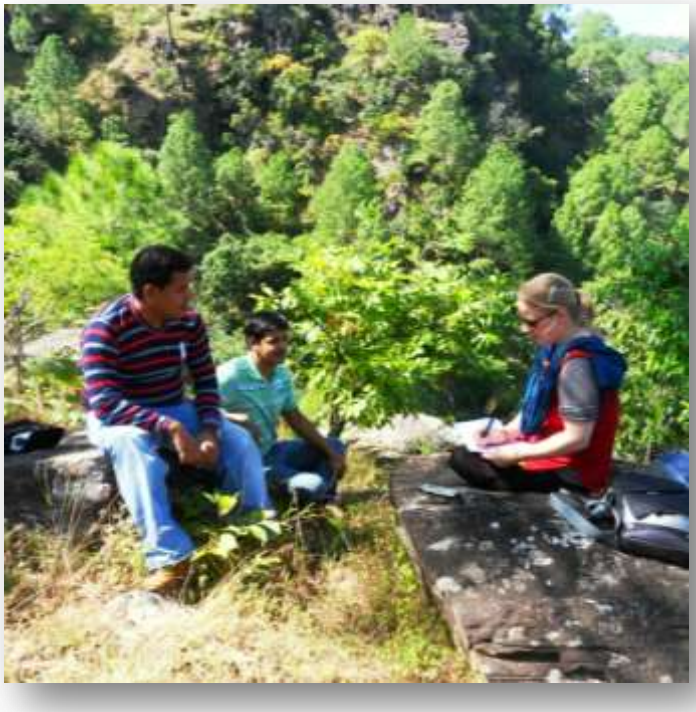
3.7.1.4 Interview Environment

Interviews were supposed to take place in private, to help ensure that participants would be confident to give honest answers and feel more relaxed. Private interviews were also expected to make it easier for the researcher to control the interview and furthermore avoid interviewees influencing each other. However, it quickly transpired that intentions did not translate into reality in the field for a variety of reasons. Even in the most remote parts of rural India privacy was a luxury hard to come by. Many of the interviews took part in the living area of small private houses, where other family members were inevitably present. While

attempts were made to minimise noise or interruption, creating an entirely private environment was not a feasible option without inconveniencing several other people. Instead, the researcher, interpreter and interviewee usually withdrew to a more quiet corner of the room. Other interviews took place in small shops where participants worked, and in restaurants. Again, on several occasions onlookers appeared who seemed to find the whole procedure interesting. The lack of doors (or in some cases entire walls dividing shops from the street) made it impossible to control this. A number of interviews also took place outside, for example while women were on a break from field work, at a temple or in a tea stall by the side of the road, as shown in the examples below (also see Appendix 3: Photographs of Interview Environment).

Figure 3.2 – Interview at a roadside tea stall

Figure 3.3 – Interview outside (Participant, Interpreter and Researcher)



The reality of conducting research in the field (literally, in some cases) presented a steep learning curve for the researcher. Adopting a flexible attitude to react to the strongly varying interview environments and becoming creative in problem solving was paramount for the success of the data collection process. For example, the researcher's schedule and time constraints of farmers in one village in West Bengal caused a large number of participants to turn up for an interview at the same time. The researcher had to make a quick decision whether to interview only one or two members of the community or everyone at the same time. The latter option was chosen in this instance. Such an at times erratic approach has its limitations. At the same time it allowed for a real immersion into the research setting and did not seem to have a negative impact on the interviews. On reflection, it may have helped in creating a more relaxing research environment by meeting participants in a natural setting in which they were comfortable. An artificial environment would probably not have been conducive to qualitative enquiry of this kind.

3.7.2 Sampling

Sampling makes research more efficient and manageable (Altinay and Paraskevas 2008) as the collection of data from everyone in the research population is usually not a realistic option (Denscombe 2007). Two types of sampling techniques exist; Probability and Non-Probability Sampling. Probability sampling mainly consists of random sampling techniques, with every element of the population having an equal chance of being selected (Greenfield 2002; Denscombe 2007; Sekaran and Bougie 2009). Non-probability sampling in contrast seeks out settings and participants where the phenomena under investigation is most likely to occur (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) and in this allowing the researcher to identify participants expected to add most value to the study (Altinay and Paraskevas 2008; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009).

A major consideration in quantitative research is generalizability and making sure that the selected sample is representative of the population and ensuring the highest degree of objectivity and generalizability possible in its selection (Decrop 2004; Denscombe 2007; Sekaran and Bougie 2009). Greenfield (2002) emphasises the importance of objectivity in order to select a representative sample which is free of bias. He points out that 'bias and variance are properties of the sample design, not of the particular sample selected' (Greenfield 2002, p.187). Qualitative research is easily criticised for more commonly applying non-probability or purposive sampling and therefore lacking in generalizability. However, Gobo (2004) argues that this is generally due to theoretical or practical reason, such as lack of population lists and the nature of social research (Decrop 2004; Denzin and Lincoln 2011), which may not aim for generalizability, but is interested in a particular group of people or settings.

For this study the researcher acknowledges the power of statistical knowledge as achievable through probability sampling. However, this approach was never a viable option in regard to this project because of several factors. Such factors include the non-predictability of participant's availability and ability to participate

in the research, or lack of information about the population (Denscombe 2007). Non-probability, convenience sampling has therefore become the adopted sampling approach. As mentioned in regard to the general approach of this study, a degree of flexibility was required in regard to sampling as well.

3.7.2.1 Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling is often used for cost and administrative reasons (Greenfield 2002). It is also commonly used when studying social phenomena, which are based on small samples and where focus is put on the specific, in-depth investigation of a phenomenon (Denscombe 2007; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009). It allows selection based on accessibility. However, as addressed by Greenfield (2002) above, there is a risk of bias with following this approach and a different set of criteria need to be considered, for example that the choice of participants is definitely not taken at random (Denscombe 2007). Purposive sampling can reduce this risk by selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of the population (Greenfield 2002) or to be most likely to provide the information needed (Sekaran 2005; Denscombe 2007). However this implies that the researcher can 'identify the characteristics that collectively capture all variation' (Greenfield 2002, p.189) and furthermore that the chosen sample correctly reflects these. Although this sampling method may lead to representative results, it is very difficult to comprehensively asses this and thus has been under some criticism. A justification for non-probability sampling is the element of discovery (Glaser and Strauss 1967), which often plays a part in small scale qualitative research, as is the case in this thesis.

One approach aligned with this view, which falls under probability sampling, is snowball sampling. Here, the sample emerges as a result of one person referring the interviewer to another two people who are likely to be of value to the research (Denscombe 2007). It also fits in with the circular research approach discussed earlier by allowing the sample to evolve as a consequence of earlier stages in the research process (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Koutra 2010). The advantage of this is

a fast growing sample size of people likely to add value to the research. Furthermore, the researcher's credibility can be increased by using each previous candidate as a reference to the next one (Denscombe 2007). The researcher acknowledges that this type of convenience sampling has its clear limitations in regard to the transferability of the findings as participants may recommend others who are similar to them in social status, for example. However, to the researcher's surprise, this did not seem to be the case. At large, participants seemed to genuinely care about the research and got very engaged in the topics. Rather than calling friends or family members, the researcher was referred to those who they perceived to be most valuable to the research, either because of their profession or age (e.g. village elders and younger people).

3.7.2.2 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling was used, which is a form of purposive sampling, the 'purpose' being that the sample is theoretically relevant as it will help in developing and testing emerging theories (Silverman 2005). A defining feature of it is that research is theory driven, i.e. responsive to the data under investigation. The researcher hence follows up on developing concepts and is open to discovering new developments and sets out to examine how these vary under different conditions. It follows a circular process of data collection, analysis and collecting more data on the basis of the discovered concepts (Flick et al. 2004; Seale et al. 2004; Corbin and Strauss 2008). The researcher has achieved data saturation when themes and concepts emerge that show depth and variation (Corbin and Strauss 2008).

Theoretical sampling was especially suited to this research project as it allowed for exploration and discovery in areas that were not sufficiently conceptualised and was expected to create a more comprehensive picture of the development project (Denscombe 2007; Corbin and Strauss 2008). In this case data was collected from two different geographical (and to a degree socio-cultural) settings, two different states of India, - Uttarakhand and West Bengal. Within these states

different villages were visited, which shared the common characteristic of being part of the IDF project and its model of co-operative Destination Management. Theoretical sampling also contributed to increasing the transferability of the findings.

3.7.2.3 Sample size

Sample size is a central part of qualitative research design as many studies will aim to make generalisations through which theoretical constructs can be developed (Leech and Owuegbuzie 2005). However, there seems to be little consensus among researchers what exactly a suitable number of, say interviews, may be. Rather, reference is made to the sample size being considered as big enough when either data richness, data saturation (Flick 2009), theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin 1990), or informational redundancy (Lincoln and Guba 1985) is achieved. Determining when any of these is attained is not a straightforward process. In the end it is up to the researcher to identify when saturation has been reached, when answers become repetitive and few new insights are gained (Denscombe 2007; Mason 2010), or when the amount of information being generated becomes counter-productive to answering the research aim (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The basis of this is established by well-formulated aims and objectives (Mason 2010) and by choosing an appropriate setting and appropriate participants who are likely to yield to the desired results (Leech and Owuegbuzie 2005). At the same time the researcher must be able to justify why a specific sample size was chosen (Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2005).

For this research project the sample size remained flexible, aiming for data saturation (Flick 2009), which would allow for in-depth analysis (Sandelowski 1995). According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2005) this is a valid approach if an appropriate sampling issue and number of cases is selected that allows generalisation of a particular situation to other settings or contexts (Maxwell 1992; Leech and Owuegbuzie 2005). For phenomenological studies a guideline for a sample size of 6-10 participants is put forward (Creswell 1998; Leech and

Owuegbuzie 2005); however, for this study the sample size became considerably larger. In the end over 80 interviews were conducted with academics and members of the co-operatives and wider local community in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand and the Purulia region of West Bengal. Of these, 50 were used for this study, made up of 26 members of the newly formed co-operatives, 10 members of the wider community in which the co-operatives operate and 14 'experts', such as academics, local politicians or tourism professionals.

The overall number of interviews is still very large for a phenomenological study. The researcher considered excluding all interviews except for those conducted with members of the co-operative to limit the amount of data and to increase to study's focus. However, on further reflection and after reading the transcripts, the decision was made to integrate some of the other perspectives, which help build a more comprehensive understanding of the situation in the villages and in which way specifically co-operatives can be of advantage to development projects of this nature.

Due to the large number of interviews conducted, the amount of qualitative data became difficult to manage and unfocused. Hence, the researcher was forced to revisit the study's aims most carefully to regain focus and help in the elimination of data, which was obstructive to answering the research aim.

The interviews, which were not used, were excluded for any of the following reasons:

- The researcher had reasonable doubt in regard to the sincerity of the participant's answers (e.g. contradictive)
- The participant turned out to be an unsuitable representative of the research population (e.g. not local)

- The participant forced his/ her own agenda on the researcher (which was repeatedly the case with politicians)
- The data gathered was not able to directly help in answering the research aim
- Data saturation had been achieved and interviews added no depth and variation (see Lincoln and Guba 1985 or Corbin and Strauss 2008)

For example, some interviews with local activists and social workers as well as industry professionals offered highly interesting information (for instance on the local fauna or hydropower), but diverted focus away from the research aim and objectives. In several instances interviews with local politicians were unusable as no authentic dialogue emerged and the researcher was only 'granted' a few minutes of the interviewee's time. Other interviews were excluded because they were repetitive in key findings, but offered little or no additional insights, as discussed by Flick (2009), Corbin and Strauss (2008) or (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

While not helpful in answering the research aim, the interviews which were not used still helped the researcher to develop a general 'feel' for the research setting and its broader environment. Likewise, whereas the interviews with local politicians did not produce trustworthy or relevant data, they were important as a way of showing respect to those with local influence and allowed for an easier operating environment. The researcher retained all interviews for future analysis and use in publications.

3.7.2.4 Sample design

The sampling frame is made up of the entire population of interest to the researcher (Denscombe 2007), in this case the members of the tourism co-operatives and other stakeholders associated with this specific tourism development in India, such as members of the community and local academics and politicians (for a detailed list see Appendix 4: Participant Information).

The areas to be included in the sample design were defined by the areas chosen for the IDF project, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. Both states suffer from poverty, while at the same time being rich in natural beauty and culture, therefore presenting potential for tourism development. Likewise, the interview participants chosen for this research study were largely defined by the boundaries of the IDF project, as the main aim of this research was to understand the stakeholder perspective of engaging in a co-operative tourism project.

Initially, the sample was therefore supposed to be solely made up of members of the co-operatives, which were part of the IDF project. However, due to delays in the IDF project on the ground, difficulties in the formation of these co-operatives and lack of communication of this to the project managers in Scotland, the researcher was presented with the dilemma of having travelled to rural Uttarakhand to undertake a first round of interviews, only to find that the main sample group did not yet exist. A decision was hence made to take a convenience approach and expand the sample group to relevant members of the community: those interested in partaking in the project and those potentially affected by tourism development in the area. The implications of this are further discussed in Point 6.4, Limitations.

In addition to this, academics and tourism professionals who attended meetings and IDF project workshops were included in the sample with the aim to add different perspectives and hence a more comprehensive understanding of the topics under investigation. These individuals were largely chosen by the IDF project managers, because of their expertise and knowledge of the local area. Others, such as the tourism minister of the Bageshwar district were directly sought out by the researcher as he was believed to potentially add special knowledge to the topic under investigation.

Outlined below are the different stakeholder groups who were interviewed and their expected contribution to the research.

Table 3.2 – Sample Groups and Expected Contribution

Participants	Expected Contribution
Key stakeholders (Members of the tourism co-operative)	To develop an understanding of the current life situation of selected rural communities To determine attitudes towards tourism, with emphasis on co-operative development. To determine motivations and attitudes towards forming co-operatives. To understand if and how co-operatives have comparative advantage in helping rural communities to empower themselves and sustainably improve their livelihoods
Wider Community	To determine attitudes towards tourism development To develop an understanding of the current life situation of selected rural communities
Academics, Experts, Politicians	For general discussion on the co-operative business model in India, in special regard to tourism To gain a more thorough understanding of challenges for rural communities of Uttarakhand To gain insight to different views on how these challenges can be addressed, training needs and implication of tourism development in general

The selection of the individual participants was supported as follows:

- The local co-ordinators and country managers of the IDF project facilitated interviews with members of the tourism co-operative and academics, experts and local politicians
- Members of the wider community (for example local business owners, farmers, village elders and anyone who may be affected by tourism

development in the area) were recruited through snowball sampling, depending on people's availability and willingness to be interviewed

- The researcher had pre-arranged an interview with the Bageshwar Tourism with the help of one of the local co-ordinators and furthermore benefited from being able to sit it on project meetings and workshops, for example at the National Co-operative Union of India (NCUI)

While the IDF project and the PhD thesis should be viewed as separate entities, the table below shows in simplified terms how the field work relates to the project's progress and thus explains some of the consecutive decisions that were made in regard to the sample design.

Table 3.3 – PhD Project/ IDF Project Timeline

Field Trips Date/Duration	PhD research	IDF project
January 2011/ One week	First familiarisation trip to Uttarakhand to meet potential participants of the IDF project and get to know the area.	Meetings with gatekeepers in the Bageshwar (Uttarakhand) area. Meetings with NCUI in Delhi and government officials in Uttarakhand to assess feasibility and support for the development project.
Juli 2012/ Two Weeks	Interviews with tourism professionals and academics from area as well as members of local community in which the tourism development took place, some of them potential members of tourism co-operatives.	"Train the trainers" workshops in Uttarakhand. Co-operatives should have been legalised by this point, but were held up do to the delays in the project. Meetings with tourism professionals and academics with specialty expertise and knowledge in the area.
October 2012/ Three weeks	Interviews in West Bengal and Uttarakhand with members of the tourism co-operatives. Researcher joins IDF team for one week and then spends a further two weeks alone in the filed interviewing co-operative members.	Co-operatives have been signed up and legalised in districts in Uttarakhand and West Bengal. Local coordinators have been assigned. Several field trips by the IDF project managers have been made at this point. Further "train the trainers" workshops are taking place at this stage.

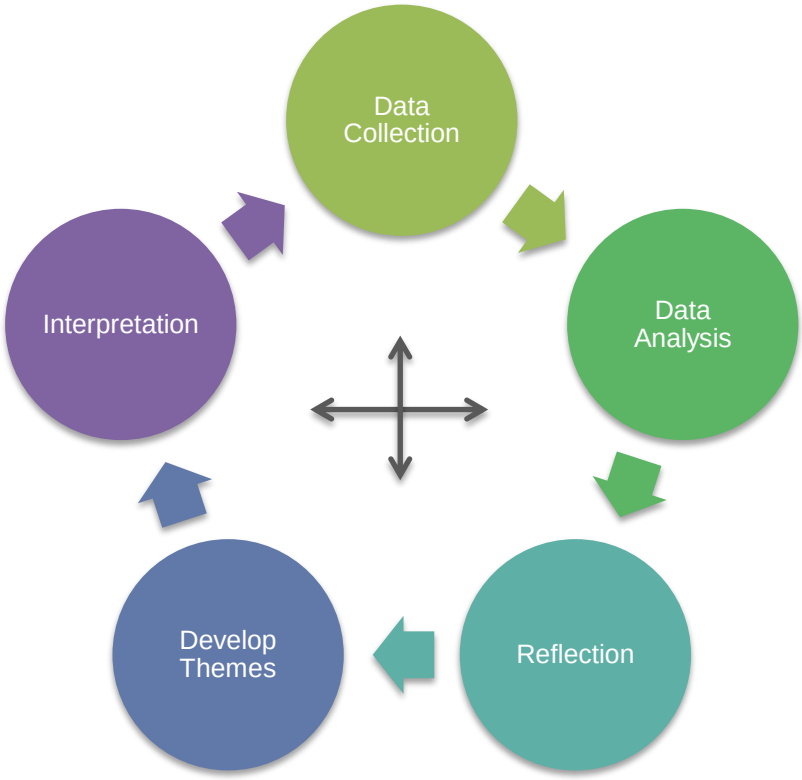
3.8 Study Setting

Research was conducted in a number of rural villages during three trips to two states of India – Uttarakhand and West Bengal (see maps and project outline in Chapter One). Each trip ranged between one and three weeks. The villages were identified by the IDF project managers as having potential for tourism development and being in need of diversification.

3.9 Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed. The data was then coded through thematic analysis, i.e. identifying themes within your data (Schwandt 1994). Going back to a phenomenological approach discussed above, a first step was to read each transcript without real intention, but solely to get a feeling for what each participant said and to become immersed in the data (Botterill and Platenkamp 2012). Only after this essential first step did the researcher start coding the data and identifying key themes. Making sense of the large amount of data qualitative research can generate is not an easy task and identifying overriding themes involves an iterative and ongoing cycle of "*quiet reflection, selection, identification, interpretation, construction and verification"* (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, p.504) as shown in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 – Iterative Research Process



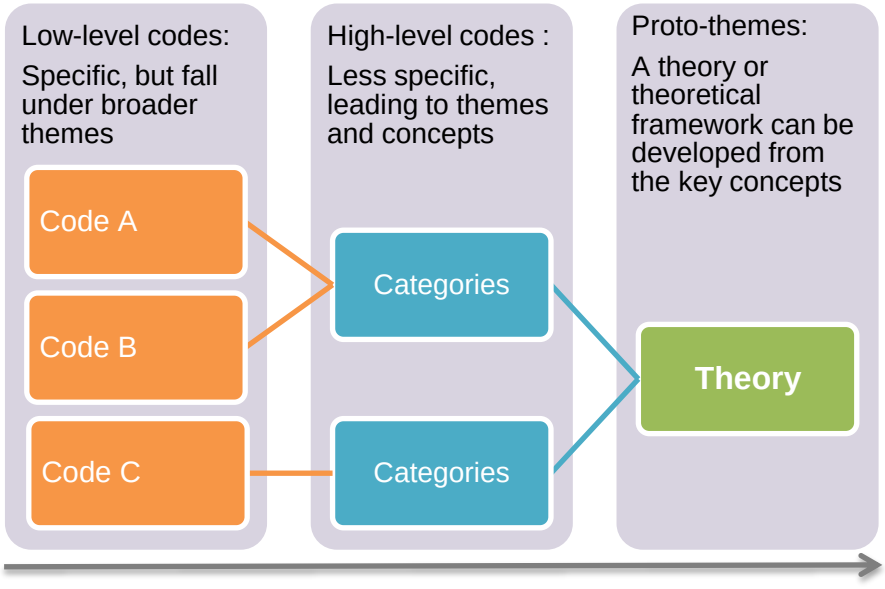
Text was broken down into smaller components and then assigned to relevant categories to allow analysis (Phillimore and Goodson 2004). Such text component units can be made up of words, sentences, paragraphs or headlines. Therefore, rather than relying solely on the interpretation of the researcher, the text provides evidence of the key messages, ensuring that analysis is "firmly rooted" in the data (Denscombe 2007, p.287), as required when adopting a phenomenological methodology. To achieve this, the researcher aimed to:

- limit preconceptions of the data
- familiarise herself with data (including cross-referencing audio material with written notes)
- be meticulous in her analysis to ensure that interpretations are based on empirical data

- ensure the process is iterative, moving back and forth between data and constantly comparing and evolving.
  (Babbie 2010; Denscombe 2007; Sekaran and Bougie 2009)

For this study thematic analysis was applied to units of ideas or themes expressed in interviews, rather than applying smaller units of words. Hence, meaning was extracted in form of larger themes rather than being concerned with the exact use of language or choice of words. After coding and categorising the data, themes and patterns began to emerge. A help in data coding was to prioritize parts of data and reducing the number of codes (Babbie 2010) by constantly asking if information found was important, checking if codes be grouped and by developing a hierarchy within these. High level codes or proto-themes therefore contained more general themes and encompassed a number of more specific lower level codes as portrayed in Figure 3.5 below.

Figure 3.5 – Data Coding Process



(Adapted from Denscombe 2007)

3.9.1 Data Analysis Software – NVivo

For data analysis software NVivo 9 was used (QSR International, 2014), which is established as an appropriate tool in qualitative analysis as it is effective in organizing and analysing text-based data (Crotty 1998; Flick 2009; Sekaran and Bougie 2009). Using the software was helpful in storing, managing and organising data, but more importantly, it was a powerful tool in coding data and developing, evaluating and re-evaluating themes. Coding took several stages, portrayed in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4 – Data Coding Stages

Stage	Process	Outcome
1	Generated a vast amount of specific, low level codes. Much too detailed. Became unsuitable for analysis.	Start over. Focus aims.
2	Started with very broad categories or proto-themes (e.g. Tourism, Co-op, Life in Village). Parts of text were put in multiple categories.	Review of broad categories.
3	Preliminary analysis of the broad categories. Categories were refined and divided into more specific categories (e.g. Tourism now included sub-categories such as 'positive impacts' and 'negative impacts', Life in Village now included 'strengths', 'challenges').	Review of refined categories. Exclusion of categories and themes not focused on research aim. Confirm that refined categories reflected broad theme. Work 'backwards' were needed.
4	Overarching themes were confirmed. Sub-categories reflected these.	Start write-up of findings.
5	Writing up findings created narrative to the themes, giving evidence that these are rooted in the data.	Discussion and analysis

3.10 Additional consideration

Some additional considerations related to this research project are discussed below.

3.10.1 Using Interpreters

Contrary to what the researcher was told prior to data collection, not all participants spoke English. Hence, use of an interpreter was indispensable to allow people to speak in the language they were most comfortable with. Two different interpreters were recruited for each respective region, who spoke English, Hindi and were also fluent in the local dialect – Manbhumi in West Bengal and Kumaoni in Uttarakhand. The interpreters ensured that participants understood the consent form and information sheet and also helped during interviews with participants who did not speak English, or did not speak it well and chose to speak in the language most comfortable to them. Interviews were translated in the moment, which allowed for an element of cross-checking that these were accurate with those participant who did have a grasp of English. Both interpreters were briefed on the following:

- Understand the importance of, and agree to the confidentiality of the interviews
- Translate answers truthfully and with best intent not to alter the content of what is being said
- Be aware of bias and to remain as neutral as possible
- A basic understanding of the IDF project and the key concepts to be covered in interviews

The partnerships developed during interviews worked very effectively. In addition to translating where necessary, the interpreters also helped in understanding the context of what was said, for instance understanding local interpretations of terminology, as the example below shows:

Excerpt 2

Researcher: And how would the road help you?

You can produce vegetables for shopping centres. (C14)

Interpreter: His meaning of shopping centre is little shop.

((Confirms)) Little shop. (C14)

In addition, especially in Uttarakhand, the researcher spent many days travelling in the car with the interpreter. This resulted in the interpreter not only assisting with interviews, but also acting as a social commentator to what was witnessed along the roads, at restaurant stops and so on. This way the researcher 'picked up' an education far beyond her research questions, but an insight into the life and culture of the area, as well as a deeper understanding of cultural norms, for example how to act when invited into someone's home, or explaining why sometimes women asked to be interviewed outside their home (when menstruating). Due to the mutual trust that developed between researcher and interpreter, it enabled the researcher to ask even sensitive questions and through this further her understanding of phenomena that may otherwise have remained outside her grasp. While this may not have had a direct impact on answering the research question as such, it did perhaps help the researcher act in a way that was conducive to making participants feel more trusting and relaxed.

3.10.2 Data Protection and Storage

In regard to data protection and storage the following points were adhered to:

- Data was audio-recorded and as soon as possible stored on external storage devices (laptop and USB stick), which were password protected and only accessible to the researcher.
- Security copies were also stored on an external hard-drive only accessible to the researcher and be password protected.

- Interviews were transcribed electronically and information identifying any individuals was removed and replaced with numbers.
- Physical original data (for example consent forms) remain stored and locked in a place only accessible to the researcher.
- Data will be stored for as long as indicated by university guidelines, which is five years after the research programme is completed and 12 months for signed consent forms. These will be kept separately on campus and thereafter in remote secure storage for the duration of the retention of the physical data.
- Anonymised electronic back-up copies were made of all data, which became the working documents.

3.10.3 Ethical Consideration

Adhering to ethical practices is an essential part of conducting research. Botterill and Platenkamp (2012) claim, however, that it is seldom discussed at deeper level in the tourism literature or moves beyond statements that research has received ethical approval from their given university. This may either suggest that tourism researchers do not face many ethical dilemmas or it may highlight the absence of an international code of ethics in social research. A difficulty in this is, however, that a universal moral order would have to be established to which everyone can adhere to (Iphofen 2011). Taking into account the many different socio-cultural settings in which research takes place, this may not be an achievable aim, as morals depend on the practices and systems of a society. Bowie (2002) gives the example of queuing: In societies without this practice, cutting in line is not an immoral action, whereas it would be in a society that does adhere to it. Nonetheless – briefly venturing into Kantian philosophy – researchers can consider whether his or her actions can be universalised without contradiction (Bowie 2002). Kant (in Bowie 2002) refers to these as categorical imperatives, which build the fundamental principles of ethics and requires humans to act only on maxims, which could become universal laws. For example, a promise without intention to be fulfilled could not be universalised as it would mean that no promises could be taken seriously, undermining the very concept.

Generally speaking, honesty must form the basis of every step in the research process, from informing participants of the aim of the research, their right to refuse to partake in the research at any stage, collecting consent and ensuring confidentiality, to the authenticity of data, its analysis and interpretation, and ensuring that no data is withheld (Flick et al. 2004; Ryen 2004; Botterill and Platenkamp 2012). Furthermore, interviews can be perceived as intrusive, offensive or create anxiety among participants (Altinay and Paraskevas 2008) and therefore one must aim for a balance between the need for data, and hence asking intrusive questions, and interfering with people's lives (Botterill and Platenkamp 2012).

Ethical issues were a serious consideration for this research and the above points have strongly guided each step of the process. Consent was obtained from all participants (see Appendix 7: Consent Form) after reading the participant information sheet (see Appendix 8: Participant Information Sheet). Furthermore, it was ensured that participants fully understood the research implications. One ethical issue that arose was connected to the IDF project itself. The project clearly gave people hope for change.

The researcher was not involved in the implementation of the project, therefore, the responsibility of creating hope, dealing with locals' disappointment due to slow progress and so on was in the hands of others. However, the researcher was aware of the potential misunderstanding of roles, and in conversations with the participants or local coordinators it did transpire that this was not always clear to the participants. In the eyes of the community, the researcher initially acted as a representative of the project and as a sign of progress in the project.

It was therefore important to clearly communicate to the participants that the researcher was not in any way in a position of authority and had no direct influence on the way the project was run. This was done before each interview and confirmation was sought from the participants that this was understood. As

participants appeared to engage in honest dialogue and were critical at times in regard to the project and its managers, it can be believed that this was clear. Furthermore, in casual and social situations with locals this was also stressed.

Hence, every effort was made to emphasize the neutral position of the researcher to the participants as well as members of the community who were not interviewed. This was essential in order to put participants at ease in terms of the confidentiality of the interviews, but also in order to manage expectations. Nonetheless, it cannot be taken for granted that people always interpreted it this way. Generally speaking, while misinterpretations of the researchers' role and intentions can be minimized through communication, these may not be able to be avoided altogether and the potential impacts of research in such a context must therefore be acknowledged.

3.10.4 Bias

The bias that can occur in multi-cultural studies can perhaps be seen as one of the bigger challenges in this project and its impacts on the data should be considered (Sekaran and Bougie 2009). The interviewer and the participants are from very different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, which can influence attitudes and behaviour towards each other and cause misunderstandings. Bulmer and Warwick (1993) discuss this in depth: Predispositions can influence the way questions are formulated, by shortening them or simplifying their meaning. The same can be true for the way the participant responds to these. Translations further increase the risk of this happening. When answers are translated back, the researcher may interpret them in favour of her expectations (Bulmer and Warwick 1993). Also, participants need to be made aware of the importance of giving truthful and honest answers, especially in societies where hospitality, courtesy and an agreeable atmosphere are central to the community spirit (Mitchell 1965). Bulmer and Warwick (1993) further emphasize that social research and interviews and exactly what this entails are not well understood in many developing countries, especially in rural areas. Hence, special care needs to be taken in making the

researchers role explicit and transparent and ethical concerns, such as participants right not to participate, need to be underlined. Koutra (2010) notes, however, that while being an outsider can be seen as a threat to this kind of research, it can also act as an advantage as the researcher can take a neutral, objective role without emotional attachment.

The researcher made herself aware of the many ways in which bias could possibly influence the research, for example her gender or the difference in the colour of skin. However, as these were just the reality of the situation and impossible to be controlled, the researcher tried to free herself of preconceptions or expectations on how she might be perceived or perceive others, and approached the situation with as impartial and unprejudiced a mind as possible.

3.10.5 Quality of the Research Design

Qualitative research is becoming more and more common in social sciences. However, for some time and perhaps still today, it was scrutinised for being unscientific as it is difficult to assess its reliability and validity in the same ways that apply to quantitative studies. Due to its very nature, being more concerned with people's feelings and perceptions, these concepts are perhaps less significant in qualitative research (Neumann 2004). Nonetheless, one must consider issues of trustworthiness, which refer to "scientific enquiry that is able to demonstrate truth value […] and allow external judgements to be made about the consistency of its procedures and the neutrality of its findings" (Erlandson et al. 1993, p.29). Guba and Lincoln (1985) developed four criteria addressing issues of trustworthiness in qualitative research, which are: Credibility; Dependability; Confirmability; and Transferability. Table 3.5 below portrays how these criteria differ to quantitative issues of research quality, which will then be addressed individually in regard to this study.

Table 3.5 – Trustworthiness and Validity in Research

Quantitative Research		Qualitative Research
Validity	Truth Value	Credibility
Reliability	Consistency	Dependability
Objectivity	Neutrality	Confirmability
Generalizability	Applicability	Transferability
	Issue addressed	
Validity in General		Trustworthiness in General

(Hamberg et al. 1994)

Credibility is considered to be one of the most important aspects in regard to trustworthiness in research (Lincoln and Guba 1985). It refers to the 'truth value' of the research, i.e. theory development reflects the interview data (Halldorsdottir 2000). This can be increased through adopting well established research methods, which has been established in previous points, participant validation, or triangulation of different data sets, groups or areas, which is the case for this study. Furthermore, familiarisation with the research participants and in-depth engagement between them and the researcher can increase credibility (Guba and Lincoln 1985 and Erlandson et al. 1993). At the same time, Lincoln and Guba (1985) add that an over-familiarisation can affect a researcher's professional judgement. In regard to this study, the researcher's time was limited and hence a full immersion in to the life of the participants was not an option. She did, however, sleep in the respective villages where research took place, ate with the locals and joined in with simple activities, such as making bread. While this could

be argued to be superficial, it nonetheless established a sense of trust amongst both parties and a friendly atmosphere. Furthermore, the 'superficiality' of relationship enabled the researcher to remain neutral to local dynamics and may have decreased the risk of bias when analysing the data.

Dependability refers to the consistency of findings and interpretations between different researchers (Schütz 1967; Moran 2000). Due to time constraints, this was not attempted by the researcher and is perhaps one of the limitations of the research design. Dependability can also be increased through cross-checking of data with those who generated the data, which was the intention of the researcher, as briefly addressed with regard to an Action Research approach. However, due to the slow progress of the project and participants changing between field trips, which was outwith the control of the researcher, this did not materialise. Nonetheless, by describing in detail what strategies were applied and the different steps which were involved in collecting and presenting the data can helping in increasing dependability. Again, the researcher aimed at delivering this in points previously covered in this chapter.

Confirmability refers to the adherence to sound research practice and ensuring that findings are a true reflection of participants' experience rather than the researcher's. The researcher aimed for transparency and clarity in her research approach throughout this thesis. This can be increased by opening up any information gathered and thought processes that could be checked by externals and reveal prejudices (Spiegelberg 1982). This has been achieved in the findings chapter of this thesis where original data is presented and conclusions drawn can be shown to be deeply rooted in the data. Furthermore, the researcher followed the recommendation by Miles and Huberman (1994), who believe that an important aspect in this is for the researcher to make her beliefs and predispositions, as well as weaknesses in the research explicit. Again, this chapter aimed to achieve this with a discussion of the researcher's epistemological and ontological position.

Shenton (2004) points at triangulation as an effective way of increasing confirmability, which was achieved to a degree through thematic sampling.

Transferability may not always be an aim of qualitative research; however, it addresses the question whether findings can theoretically, if not statistically, be applied to other settings (Halldorsdottir 2000). A difficulty in this is that qualitative research is often bound to a specific context (Erlandson et al. 1993). To establish a degree of transferability the researcher outlined the specific context of the setting and how findings relate to existing literature. This will enable other researchers to assess whether the research may be transferable to a research setting or context similar in nature (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

There are clear limitations to the research, which will be further discussed in Chapter 6. Overall, however, the researcher can argue to have achieved trustworthiness in her research by following reputable research approaches, by portraying a professional neutrality in the collection and analysis of the research findings and by making all steps of the research process as transparent and explicit as possible.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research process, the nature of the research problem and explained the philosophical choices in research, which clarified why the methods adopted for this research study were appropriate and why others were not. It was argued that an interpretivist inductive approach embracing a phenomenological methodology would be most appropriate in answering the research aim. For this, semi-structured interviews were conducted, tapping into the experience and expectations of stakeholders involved in the co-operative tourism project. The following chapter presents the findings of these.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Chapter 4: Findings

4 Introduction

The preceding chapters identified the lack of research on the concept of co-operative tourism as an approach to sustainable rural development and, taking into account the theoretical advantage co-operatives could play in this, the need for a critical examination of the topic. The research approach and specific characteristics of the methodology applied were also outlined. This chapter now presents the findings from primary research. The order of presentation loosely follows the structure of the interviews, going from broad to specific, as simplified in Figure 4.1. Findings from West Bengal and Uttarakhand are presented together in order to highlight differences or similarities more clearly. Where appropriate the voices of experts are used as well, allowing the reader to consider the different viewpoints.

Figure 4.1 – Findings Structure

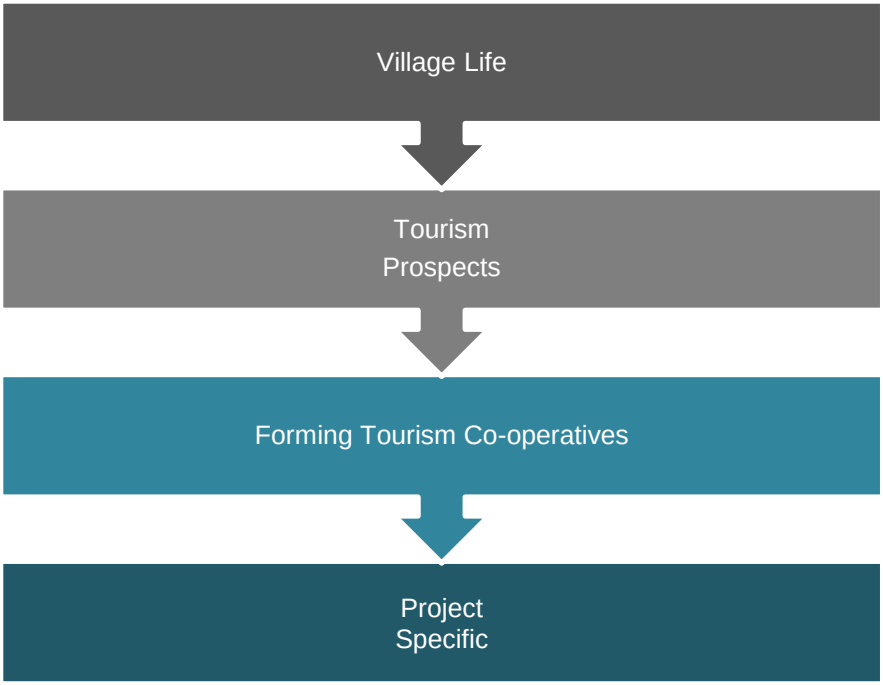


Table 4.1 offers an overview of the codes used for the different sample groups (for a more comprehensive list see Appendix 4: Participant Information).

Table 4.1 – Sample Codes Explained

Code	Explanation	Professions	Place
C	Co-operative	Mostly farmers	Uttarakhand West Bengal
E	Expert	Academics Tourism Professional Politicians	Uttarakhand Delhi
L	Local stakeholders	Shop owners Farmers Neighbours of the members of the co-operatives	Uttarakhand
-G	Group		

Relating to Objective 1 – *'To develop an understanding of the current life situation of selected rural communities, the specific nature of strengths and challenges within these and the implications that can be drawn from this'* – first 'Village Life' will be presented, further divided into sub-themes of *Work and Life* in general, *Strengths*, *Weaknesses* and specific *Needs*. Developing this basic understanding of difficulties and strengths in the communities is necessary in order to fully judge whether or not tourism – and specifically tourism co-operatives – have a place in these particular settings.

The second section will then turn to tourism, and in this, address Objective 2 – *To ascertain if tourism can be seen as a viable development tool to address the challenges of these rural communities.* Tourism is first presented in its own right, as it poses its own unique potential and challenges, which should be explored before looking at the concept of co-operative tourism as one.

This is followed by findings on the co-operative as a business model, again, in its own right, and then co-operatives in a tourism context. Here, Objective 3 – *To identify perceptions of and motivations towards forming tourism co-operatives* – and Objective 4 – *To gain an understanding of the practical implications of a co-operative approach to tourism* – are addressed.

4.1 Village Life

This first section looks at life in the village, as stated in Objective 1. All sample groups were asked to tell the researcher about life in the villages, in simple terms, what they perceived to be good and what they perceived to be difficult. A wide range of themes emerged. For the sake of clarity, only the main themes will be discussed below (for a full list see Appendix 9: Codes For 'Village Life').

4.1.1 Farming and Local Identity

Most members of the co-operatives and members of the wider community who were interviewed live from subsistence farming (C1, C2, C4, C7-G, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14, C15, C18-G, C20, C21, C22, C26-G, L4, L8, L9, L10-G). Some, in addition to farming, run small enterprises and businesses, such as selling surplus produce, running local taxis or a variety of small shops (C2, C4, C15, C16, C17, C27, L4, L6). A few of the participants solely had incomes away from agriculture, such as running small enterprises (C3, C6, L5, L7), one large business owner (C5), one working in performing arts (C8), one local politician (C24) and three teachers (L1, L2, L3), of which the latter two are retired. Interviews and

observations showed that farming appears to be deeply ingrained in the local identity.

> *First thing's agriculture. So my parents gave me agriculture, so I first give respect to agriculture. That is a very important point. (C9)*

At the same time it became evident that agriculture does not provide a stable and sustainable income (C6, C8, L4) and that the areas under investigation lack employment alternatives because of the lack of access to markets (C8).

> *Because no work actually. Here is no work. But lots of potential is there, like natural fibre, cultural events, pottery. But they don't know how to market this. (C8)*

4.1.2 Strengths

Overall, people value where they live and do not want to leave their villages. There were slight regional differences in what shaped these values. In Uttarakhand, the main themes that emerged are closely connected to the environment, the good air quality, nature and peacefulness (C20, C21, C22, C26-G, L6, L7).

> *It's a peaceful life. When the people have stress in their country, their ways, always pressure, all the work. So here, they come here and they relax, they refresh their mind, they refresh their energy, because here environment is very good, clean environment. And some plants are – pine. The pine is very good for breathing. Because the pine's air heal our lungs.*

So this is good […]. They feel peaceful area here, so this is called Shanti[4] *(L7).*

In West Bengal more emphasis was put on people, mutual support structures (C1, C2, C5, C6, C7-G, C8) and culture (C5, C8), as well as living in a good environment (C3, C4).

[I] love to work together at the festival, you know that is the best point. […] The best part is people working together. (C1)

Culture appears to be a very important aspect of life to these participants:

People are so concerned about their culture […]. This is the actual power of these people. (C8)

Positive aspects are often put in direct contrast to life in the cities, which is perceived as crowded, dirty and polluted and "unfresh" (L6, L10-G).

First thing is air and water. Other thing is in the city the mosquito is too much, the garbage is too much. In village you don't have those kinds of things. This is the difference (L10-G – Female 2).

Another reason for wanting to stay in the village is simply being used to life there (L4, L8).

I love this place, because I spent most of my time here (L8).

[4] Shanti = Hindi word. Most commonly means peace, serenity, calmness, stillness

4.1.3 Weaknesses

While there are clear positives about living in the different areas, such as a good natural environment, strong culture and mutual support, the difficulties communities and individuals face are manifold. The overarching problem is poverty, which is mainly evident in the lack of employment opportunities (C3, C4, C17, C26-G, E3, E8, E10) and the resulting migration away from the villages to the cities. The causes of unemployment and migration are also multi-faceted. The main themes that emerged in this regard were infrastructural challenges as well as socio-cultural difficulties, including remoteness and lack of road access, and consequently the lack of access to healthcare, education and markets. These themes are mentioned by all sample groups. Especially the access of good quality education needs to be highlighted, which appears to be of major importance to those interviewed.

4.1.3.1 Poverty

Poverty is prevalent in both states. As a general term it was brought up more often by the members of the co-operative in Purulia, West Bengal (C3, C5, C6, C8). Purulia is the poorer area of the two and, through the researcher's observations, poverty was much more obvious here than in Uttarakhand.

> *People are so poor [in] these villages, this is the second poorest state of India. (C8)*

However, poverty also emerged as a theme in Uttarakhand (C10, C16, L1, E2, E3, E10).

> *The farmers they are desperate and don't know what to do. Financially they are wrecks. (E2)*

Life is basic. In this area life is very struggle. People have to struggle for food to take to mouth. Hand to mouth. (L1)

This is also due to political reasons. Improvements through development strategies and projects are hindered by opaque processes on government level, mostly in the context of corruption and middle men misusing financial resources (L1, E4, E7).

Bureaucrats, politicians and some money carried over to next year. Loss is getting rural person. That's big problem. Planning is very good, but implementation is very poor. That's why poor is poorest, rich is richest. India planned 100% success for rural areas. But whole year is spent and getting only 20%. (E4)

4.1.3.2 Migration

Derived from the interviews, the main threat for the rural areas under investigation is the mass migration of, mainly, men to the cities (C1, C2, C3, C7-G, C8, C15, C17, C19, C26-G, C27).

Some people are migrating, 30% migration in my village. (C17)

48% migrate from here to Chennai, from here to Delhi, here to Calcutta. (C8)

Lack of opportunities for education or employment contribute to this problem.

Most of my family and friends have left the village for nearby towns. So most of the people have left the village because there is no scope of education in no way. No business to earn money, so they left for nearby towns. Some are going ((leaving)) to educate that child. Also, out of the whole village maximum number of houses are empty. (C19)

4.1.3.3 Lack of Employment Opportunities

As outlined above, this is due to a number of factors, such as a generally poor infrastructure, environmental changes, and changing attitudes, but primarily comes down to agricultural opportunities decreasing and the lack of alternative employment opportunities (C3, C4, C17, E3, E8, E10).

Researcher: Is farming enough for people to live off?

No, no. Some people have enough. Fifteen of families. Fifteen families have enough from farming, Fifteen families have left the village. (C17)

Talking to a group of members of one of the most rural co-operatives in Uttarakhand, of whom all but one live outside of their native village, shows that people are eager to return to their villages if given the opportunity.

Researcher: And why did you leave the village?

[I] live in the village, but whenever I can get work I leave the village. It's because of work.

Researcher: And this is jumping ahead into the future, but would you consider going back to the village if there was another employment opportunity?

Yes! Everybody would love that. (C26-G)

Agricultural activities are decreasing for a number of reasons. One reason is that *"agriculture is not very productive, so [people] don't get value for their labour"* (E3) or environmental changes, such as climate change (C10, E3, E10, C21, L3 and L4, E7, C26-G).

> *When we go back to when everything was nice, the forest was nice, the soil was nice, it was mainly rain-fed. So now, even the rain, because of climate change, it has changed. Initially, we had 160 days of rain, now we have 60 to 70 days of rain and in those days we have equal amount of rainfall. So people were happy doing agriculture, but now they don't get the kind of returns from agriculture because of the soil quality. 65% of the land is forest, so most of the population, if we talk about rural, is dependent on agriculture. Out of the land only one third is cultivated, because the productivity of the soil has gone […] so the farmers leave the field. So unemployment is a major crisis. (E10)*

Production has decreased for unknown reasons.

> *Another thing is farming, earlier this […] is giving good grains to us, but now the capacity of production is less, we don't know why. (C21)*

Others believe it is due to changes in attitudes and poor work ethics in younger people (L2, L8).

> *Earlier people work very hard, in their field or any other thing. Now people don't want to work hard. (L2)*

Participant L8 agrees that there are few opportunities, but points out that there are ways of finding some work. However, she thinks the problem is that educated children will not want to do labour work.

> *If you're talking about this time [now], there is no opportunity for jobs, but there is a system in the government of India: […] Every house will get IR100 if they will do labour work in their own village. If anybody build house here, then this kind of work is available. You have to carry from the far area the stone to build a house. This kind of work is available, but the educated children doesn't want to do the labour work. (L8)*

4.1.3.4 Decreasing Land Holdings

Furthermore, decreasing land holdings (E7), because of inheritance being divided between offspring (E2, L3 and 4) or being tempted to sell land for short-term benefits (L2, C26-G) impose limitations on subsistence as well as commercial farming.

> *The hills are now going spoiled, because of the mining. […] People earning too much money from mining. They are giving their fields to the miners, but for the farming and other things, they don't now have the fields. […] Because they are not looking for the future. The man who is mining the fields they will not be giving [them] enough […] money. They are using money for themselves. They are giving them very little money. Like everywhere you can see. (L2)*

4.1.3.5 Infrastructure and Lack of Access

The remoteness of the villages (E3) and the lack of or poor quality of road access (E1, E8, L7, L8, C17, C20, C27), but also mobile phone connections (C6, C27), is brought up by the majority of participants across the different sample groups.

The community have lots of difficulties. Have you seen? The roads are very bad. You can't come by taxi here, because the roads are very [bad]. (L7)

This has several implications, such as access to schools, hospitals and markets, and is seen by many as a direct link to migration away from the villages (C17, C27, L9, L10-G).

We don't have a lot of opportunity there for other businesses. We need infrastructure, roads, communication, these kind of facilities for any kind of business. (C27)

We are not linked with the road.

Researcher: And how would the road help you?

You can produce vegetables [for] shopping centres ((little shops)). (L9)

Oh, very difficult. You saw from Delhi to [village] how difficult in our villages. […] Firstly, we are not linked from the roads here. Then […] hospital, not any facilities. And education problem. (L9)

A female from one village, which is completely inaccessible by road and during Monsoon requires a one or two hour hike to the nearest road, points out that it can have fatal implications:

If [anyone is] ill here, then we have to depend on the community. Because they come, they take on his shoulder, then they can put on the road, then

they go to hospital. It's a very long procedure. Anyone can die if he's serious illness. So that is a basic problem. (L10-G)

Participants think life would be better with improved road access (C20, L8, L3 and L4, L7). One participant even states that he and others would return to his village if the road was better.

Right now the road is not going to the village. [If] the road is better, I myself want to go back to the village and start again farming. The people I know, they will also want to come back to the village if the road was better. (C20)

At the same time, L7 points out that even if they had a hospital, it would be unlikely that any doctor would be willing to work there, when they could earn much more money in the bigger towns and cities.

In our village some people are doctors in Delhi. They are practicing [in] Dehradun, Almora, but they will not serve here, because that kind of money they will not get. In Bageshwar, [they] take INR 20[5] *from the villager. It's so much for them. In Delhi they can charge you INR 1000, INR 5000, they'll ((the people in Delhi)) be happy to give. (L7)*

This already highlights that some of the problems villagers are experiencing are multi-faceted and that the road may solve some, but certainly not all of their problems.

[5] INR 20 = approximately £0,20 (May 2014)

4.1.3.6 Education

This is also the case in regard to education, a theme which strongly emerged as an aspect of major importance to the villagers and, again, was mentioned by most participants across the different sample groups (L1, L3 L4, C2, C3, C7-G, C8, C16, C18-G, C19, C21, C25, E1).

> *[I] feel that the first problem here is infrastructure, like education, […] mainly education. That's why people now leaving these villages. (L3).*

It can furthermore be seen as one of the main reasons why people leave the villages (C25, C7-G, C21, L3, L4, E1). Anyone who can afford to, sends their children away to get a better education.

> *All things are bad, you know, this is and no way to find work in the village. We can't get good education for our children. We have to go out ((leave)). (C21)*

This participant speaks from the perspective of someone who has already left the area, but has taken the opportunity of the co-operative tourism project to spend more time in his native place.

> *Like, actually, I am also the same. My village is this. My parents are living here, my grandma is here. I am 35 years old, but if the facility [was] here, then I would also not like to go out from the village. […] I am going out, because of my children. Because my father at that time earn a little bit money. They sent me out of the village. I study [in] Pantnagar[6] with my sister. So that's when they give me little education. Then I tried my child to be much better. That's why I sent my children out also. (C25)*

[6] Approximately 6 hours away from his native village by car.

4.1.3.7 Mind-set

Whereas other participants believe lack of education is a reason for migration, some participants make an interesting point that education, or more so, the mind-set of educated people, is a problem (L10-G, E3, E8).

> *Uneducated is not a problem. He can do anything. But the person with education […], he will never do a blue collar job. He will always prefer a white collar job. So that mind-set has to be changed. It is not too easy to become a clerk in an office. […] These are white collar jobs. Now these jobs are not there. So that mind-set has to be changed. That mental block, "I will not do this business. I am MA in History or English, I will not drive, change my field". This mind-set has to change. (E3)*

Again, access to good quality education may not alone stop people from leaving, because the lack of employment opportunities still remains.

> *If the road is better, if the education is better, the children will stay here, but this is not the solution of the whole problem. After that, if the guy get education, what he will do after that? If he pass 12 standard[7], after that he need employ here, jobs here. […] If we can create some kind of jobs here, then the people will stay here. Otherwise, if the good road is here, good school here, after that people will leave this place [anyway]. (L10-G – male)*

> *The school is not good, my child [leaves] after class 12. If there is any employment, then I would not like to send my child out. (L8)*

[7] Final year of secondary school (Cheney et al. 2006)

These findings show that, unsurprisingly, migration is seen as a serious problem. They also help in recognizing that not only unemployment per se, but also quality of education available, the general infrastructure, changing attitudes and the size of land holdings contribute to this problem. Migration, of course, has major social implications for the areas under investigation. Participants speak of gender imbalances (E1, E3, E4), and a disrupted family life (L10-G, L2, L3 and L4,), putting immense pressure on females and in some villages a mainly female population being left behind (E3). Furthermore, some participants talk about how unemployment has led some men to turn to alcohol (E3) or behave in other anti-social ways (E3).

4.1.4 Implications

4.1.4.1 Social Imbalance

Young people in particular are missing from rural life.

> *Most of the youth has gone for in search of employment. So most of the villages are [empty] or only by old ladies, old men, mothers and wives. There are hardly any men folk around. That's a major problem. (E3)*

These participants explain the general situation for women in the villages, who appear to be disadvantaged in regard to workload (C18-G, L4), the quality of education they receive (C12, E4) and inheritance, which they are entitled to by law, but are not aware of (E4).

> *Men do a lot of things, they go to the market. So they do a little better than the ladies. Because the ladies they have to do only fieldwork, take care of the animals and their children for school. So they have no time to discuss*

anything else. It also because they don't know. So that's not so good for the village life. (C18-G)

One older woman was complaining about her son not living with her.

At old age, now I am old age, now the basic problem is, now I am old and my son is not living with us. (L10-G)

Another man is telling about his worries about his family, who all live in different parts of India and abroad. He himself has a social obligation to stay and support his parents who still live in the village.

[I have] 3 sons. One son is doing job in Delhi, hotelier. [One] is in Bermuda - he is a good earning person. He is earning around 1 Lakh[8] and INR 15.000 per month. My children are in Delhi. I have a house here and they live there. But I am not living with my wife or children, because my parents are in [this] village. My children are in Delhi [and] in Bermuda. So I have three parts in my life. I have worries about my parents' life. I have worries about my children's life. If we [were] together, then I have [no worries]. (L2)

This local feels similar. He would like to stay with his daughter who lives in Haldwani, one of the larger cities of Uttarakhand, but does not like life there.

I spent 72 years of my life in this village or in this area. Now if I would live with my children outside of my village, like my daughter-in-law [is]

[8] 1 Lakh = INR 100,000. INR 115,000 = approximately £1264 (June 2013)

staying in Haldwani[9]*, if I went there, I don't like. I don't know too many people there. I have problem with language also, so I want to stay here only. (L3 and L4)*

4.1.4.2 Alcoholism

Alcohol abuse is repeatedly brought up as a challenge in both states in regard to men turning to alcohol, because they have nothing better to do (C1, E3, L2). This was in accordance to the researcher's observations, who witnessed several cases of severely drunk men from the villages lying by the road side. According to the above participants, lack of employment plays a part in this.

And the bad point is that people have a habit of drinking alcohol, that is the bad part. Gambling even.

Researcher: And why do people drink and gamble?

Lots of unemployment, they pass their time like this. (C1)

So there is a lot of social problem and there is a huge problem, alcohol consumption. […] Drugs are not so much of a problem, but alcohol is massive problem. People are dying of liver cirrhosis, it's a massive problem. (E2)

Participant E3 believes that this would not happen if there were employment opportunities.

[…] These young people who are in to their 20s or early 30s. If they get some employment, they won't indulge in all these things [alcohol]. This is all happening because they have extra time. They have nothing to do. So

[9] Approximately 4 hours away by car

> *they get easily diverted. So if they get some sort of employment, self-employment, whatever you call it, so they have at least somewhere to go, right? Now they don't. They do their under-graduate, graduate, then post-graduate – then they are still job less. (E3)*

Participant E3 also believes that socially there is a lot at stake if awareness of this problem is not increased.

> *This educated unemployed youth has to be harnessed. Otherwise, they get into crime, all sorts of nonsense and the state will become [a] very troublesome state. I have really serious fears about that. (E3)*

This shows the complexity of the problem. Lack of education drives people to migrate or to send their children away, while at the same time, education may keep them from finding suitable jobs in their villages. Unemployment creates further social problems, such as alcohol abuse. This emphasizes the importance of creating alternative employment if migration is to be stopped and these social problems are to be tackled.

4.1.5 The Need for Employment Alternatives and Opportunities

Having established a variety of problems these rural communities face, the interviews then turned to thinking about employment alternatives and other things that could improve their livelihoods. The need to create alternative employment, or employment complementing traditional activities, is strongly expressed (L1, E9, E3), as well as the point that the area lacks in opportunities to do so (C18-G, C27, E9). Participants knew from the outset of the interview of the co-operative tourism project. Inevitably this will have shaped their thinking to a degree. However, participants were encouraged to think of other alternatives to tourism or express anything else they could think of. Nonetheless, few concrete ideas on what kind of jobs could be created transpired. Apart from tourism, some mention

employment in the army (E2, E6), processing and sale of local produce (L10-G, L8, E1, C26-G), government jobs, or running various small businesses, such as a food stalls or taxis (L2). However, none of these options appear to present a real solution to the problem.

4.1.5.1 Non-agricultural Diversification

These participants, predominantly experts, emphasise the importance of agriculture for all of India (E9) and, at the same time, the importance of finding employment alternatives (E3, E9).

> *Because most of, like I told you, villages are torn by unemployment. Agriculture is not very productive, so they don't get value for their labour and there are hardly any industries around, so the only thing would be to harness the local potential whatever, local hydropower, local - whatever they can produce. (E3)*

In the case of Uttarakhand, however, the hilly terrain limits the range of business opportunities (E9).

> *The major challenge today is the challenge to find alternative livelihoods from agriculture. Agriculture is becoming an activity of diminishing returns and yet 60% of the people are dependent on agriculture. The statistic in India is currently that agriculture contributes 17% to the GDP, but almost 60% are dependent on agriculture, which is the situation out here. Only thing is that I fear, that agriculture contributes less in the case of Uttarakhand. So the reality is that you have to find alternatives to agriculture. The mountains and hills are not very suitable for manufacturing. It's very difficult to find raw material there, then process it into a finished product and then bring it back. So, secondary sector activities also very limited. (E9)*

Participant L1 agrees that there are no jobs in the area and that business alternatives need to be developed that do not have such detrimental effects on the environment as some of the activities currently taking place.

> *Neither any job is here. We can't say we have many opportunities, because none of the industries running here by the government. And we have some [raw material] in this area. But it is also damag[ing] for the people in this area, because the government have already declared [this area] as zone 5 area*[10] *for the earthquake. So while we are digging out the material for the greediness, but we don't think about the future? The future is [affected by] the backwardness. Because [when] the land is sliding, means two, three villages will be vanished from the map. So this is not good. Opportunity only in the field of education, in the government teachers, or in the official. None other facilities. We have to get the opportunity to have a go at something, to earn money, to get out the good money. And [there is] scope […] in the business. (L1)*

Employment in the army came up as the only alternative to people without education (E6). However, another participant points out that employment opportunities in the army are also decreasing.

> *And Kumaon, the main [employment opportunity] is basically service in army. The trouble is that army at the national level they are [making cuts] for every state now. So at one time every family had one son in the army. Now it's not possible because of the cuts. So there are several reason [why people are leaving] if you start counting. (E2)*

[10] Very high damage risk zone

It has by now become clear, that the challenges faced by these communities are manifold, however boil down to an explicit need for alternative employment opportunities, which in its own right, presents a major challenge. The discussion now turns to tourism in this regard.

4.2 Tourism

After establishing an understanding of life in the various villages, its multi-facetted problems and the explicit need for employment alternatives, the researcher directed the conversation into the tourism domain. This addresses Objective 2 – *'to ascertain if tourism can be seen as a viable development tool to address the challenges of these rural communities* – and explores what potential tourism may have for sustainable rural development in this context. This section touches upon many of the aspects so often addressed in tourism development discourse, its negative and positive impacts, as well as identifying shortcomings and difficulties that may have a negative impact on the viabilty of a tourism-only approach, hinting at the need for a business structure that could overcome these.

4.2.1 General Prospects

Participants in both areas were enthusiastic about tourism prospects in general, which is clearly seen as an opportunity to create employment and income and tackle migration (C1, C9, C16, C17, C19, C20, C22, C26-G, L1, L8, L10-G, L7, E1, E3, E5, E8, E9, E11, E12).

> *If tourism is there, because people are migrating in huge quantities from villages, we need that business in our village. […] I will get business and you will earn money also. (C26-G)*

Some mention the trickle effect this could have on other businesses in the community (C16, C19, C20, C22, E1, E8, E9), specifically on transport (C16,

C19) small shops (C20) or restaurants (C22), as well as creating opportunities for agricultural activities, for example by processing local produce (E1, E8).

> *The whole village will benefit. The whole community will benefit. Somebody will be a tour guide or taxi. Somebody will make food for the homestays. The whole village will benefit. (C19)*

> *See, there is a lot that could happen - on farm activities and off farm activities like tourism, small scale industries, agri-business, food processing. […]. One of the positive things of the area is, that it creates a niche environment for agriculture and agriculture products. So that could be leveraged in terms of food processing. (E8)*

This enthusiasm for the prospects of tourism also manifests itself in the way participants feel about where they live and what they would have to offer to tourists, which is reflected in what participants describe as their tourism product.

4.2.2 Product

In both Uttarakhand and West Bengal participants mention their areas' natural beauty (E1, E2, C3, C9, C13, C20, C22, C26-G, L1) and culture, ranging from festival, temples and traditional ways of life (E1, E3, E12, C1, C2, C3, C5, C7-G, C10, C12, C13, C15, C17), as reasons for why people would want to visit, only with slight differences in emphasis in each respective state. The participants from Uttarakhand put most emphasis on their natural assets, such as views of the Himalayas, good air quality and tranquillity.

> *[…] the nature has given us a full… we can say very good, wealthy place - Heaven. Everybody says 'where is the heaven?'. Everybody says 'this is*

the downward of the Himalaya glaciers'. Everybody. Badrinath[11] is here, Kedarnath[12] is here and all the five to eight peaks of Himalayas are here. So, why we should not? This is a very big opportunity here to have tourism. (L1)

Tourist can enjoy a bit our traditions, our traditional moments, our traditional system, but a lot of opportunity is the beauty of Himalaya. […] Beauty of river, beauty of forests and location of mountains. […] Nowadays, the age of environmental tourism, I think, big sound pollution is there ((in the cities)), big air pollution is there. In my village no sound. Vehicle sound - no. Horn sound - no. You can enjoy in morning the sound of birds' song. (E7)

In West Bengal participants identified their cultural heritage and traditions as the core product.

My livelihood, our livelihoods - so colorful. We are poor, but we are rich. We are poor, we are politically neglected, we are bla bla bla. But I don't bother, I just work. Politically disturbed, no work. But when we talk, it becomes a song. When we walk, it becomes a dance. That is our culture, the Purulia people. That's why you will also enjoy the life. […] Tourists coming to our area for one day. Tourists go back to his home, he remembers. He spent one hour with my district, then he goes to his or her home or country or city or district. He thinks about our district. He thinks 'I went to Purulia'. (C8)

Only a few excerpts are presented above to demonstrate the immense pride participants have in their area and to stress how eager they are to share this with

[11] Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu
[12] Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva

tourists. As these do not directly benefit our answering of Objective 2 this section is kept brief. They do however tell us that tourism as a general concept is seen as a viable opportunity by the participants in each region.

4.2.3 Potentially Negative Impacts

Sustainable tourism development requires planners to be aware of the potentially negative impacts of tourism and how to manage these. For this reason, the researcher was interested in determining the level of awareness of such impacts among the participants. In addition it was necessary to understanding the potential impacts in this particular context in order to establish if co-operatives have potential in alleviating them.

4.2.3.1 "No problem"

Participants were asked the simple question about potentially good and bad things tourism could create. When prompted about the potentially negative impacts of tourism, many participants (C1, C2, C3, C4, C24, L1, L10-G, E4, E13), first portrayed a *no problem* kind of attitude.

> Researcher: Can you tell me something bad that tourism could bring?
>
> *Only good points! (C1)*

> *I love the environment, I love the people, I love the place, I love everything, we don't have any problems. You don't have any problems! (C4)*

Especially awareness of the potentially negative impact tourism development can have on the environment was low and brought up by only a few experts who talk about the lack of *waste management* (E1, E8, E10) and a local woman who talks

about the increased need for fire wood to cook for an increased amount of people, which will have an effect on the forests (L8). Most participants did not think tourism could have a negative impact on the environment, even when the researcher prompted strongly. The researcher aimed at avoiding leading questions; however, on several occasions examples were given to participants in an attempt to gain more critical insights, for transparency presented in the excerpts below:

> Researcher: Let me just ask again about the garbage, because the tourists may produce a lot of plastic [garbage]. How will you manage that?
>
> *No problem, I myself arrange all things. (C24)*

> Researcher: But what if the tourists, they leave their trash or they don't stick to the path?
>
> *No! No!*
>
> Researcher: You don't think so?
>
> *No! (E4)*

> Researcher: Do you think tourism could bring any bad things?
>
> *No. No problem. This can't be any problem.*
>
> Researcher: And what if a lot of people come for trekking – they could destroy the environment maybe?
>
> *No! They will not. They are educated, they are wealthy, they will not destroy our environment. (L10-G)*

Perhaps the views of E13, government appointed tourism officer for the Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand, in particular highlights the low level of environmental awareness, even amongst high ranking professionals.

Researcher: Do you see any negative impacts, on the society, environment...?

No, I don't think so. Community is welcoming to the tourists, they respect the culture. I know some places where tourists do come. The villagers and communities are ready to welcome them.

Researcher: And the environment?

No, tourists not make any harm to the environment. (E13)

Besides portraying little negative or critical attitudes as such, there is also evidence of lack of ownership or responsibility towards potential problems, which are seen as government responsibility rather than an individual's responsibility.

This part is the duty of the government to check out and not the people of the interior ((rural people)). Every quality has a bad and good sentiment, but we have to shine out first of all the good things. It's the duty of the government. It's not my duty to check out. (L1)

Perhaps this *'no problem'* attitude was due to cultural norms, which are difficult to tap by an 'outside' researcher. However, further discussion indicated that participants were able to anticipate a variety of problems, predominantly of a socio-cultural nature.

4.2.3.2 Social-cultural

Areas of concern that emerged from the interviews were *tourist behaviour* (C19), most prominently in the context of *western clothing* (C6, C7-G, C9, L6) and *drinking alcohol* (C8, C10, C12, C14, C17, C18-G-G, C20).

If the tourists drink a lot and is misbehaving, then we need the men at home. Otherwise, if the man ((husband or sons)) is not there and the guest is misbehaving, then we will call the villagers and people will tell them they are doing wrong. So maybe the next day they [have to] leave. (C10)

Concerns about western clothing and behaviour, such as public displays of affection (C6, C7-G, C9, L6), was followed up on by the researcher in order to deepen an understanding of how openly cultural differences would be embraced or rejected, and if these could be source of discontent in the community. Furthermore, when such cultural differences did emerge, the researcher asked how they could be addressed in order to avoid conflicts.

The problem is with dress. But it's not a big problem, because these days even people here, they tried jeans. If we feel like, we would ask people to cover up, if they feel like. We don't mind this, you know, putting hand on the shoulder, but if it's [too] much we will ask them. Because in this area women are too shy, they will not look at you, they will not even walk with you. (C7-G)

I know the foreign culture. For example, when you come with me, put on the clothes. Not necessarily, sorry, but cover the body.

Researcher: So what would you do if somebody was not [covering up] very much, wearing shorts…?

I tell them 'don't wear these shorts'. I will say 'I don't take you anywhere, you stay only [in] my house'. Actually bad, it's only for women. Problem only for woman. If I take some woman for trekking, I say, 'first you change dress'. (C9)

Imitating such tourist behaviour, and hence outsiders' culture affecting the local culture, was a worry to some of the villagers and addressed in different ways. To

some it is seen as an infiltration of the local culture (E3), often, as touched upon previously, in regard to alcohol consumption setting a negative example to the local youth (C8, C14, E3). Others, however, perceive it as a natural development or as setting a positive example to locals (E9). To others again it is a little of both (C6, L10-G). While participant C6 thinks it is important to protect the local culture, as it is the main reason why tourists may be attracted to visit in the first place, he does not seem threatened by it.

> *I think Western culture will affect our own culture. If they will come, they will affect our culture. Some of the time. Not in a big way, but maybe there's something. So I think we should take care that, we should concentrate on that, we should take care of our culture. Because the people, the tourist people will come because of our own culture. If we imitate that, they will not come. So we will save our own culture first and after that only, if we feel like imitating theirs, we will go for that if it doesn't affect our culture. Because we are known for the culture and it is our product. (C6)*

This is in contrast to participant E3, who fears that tourism could create an inferiority complex and have long lasting effects on the local psyche.

> *When the tourists come from bigger cities, they bring a lot of things, new fashions, everything, new lifestyle, so that creates an inferiority complex in the rural folk and then they try to emulate them, they try to ape them. That is one negative aspect. And what happens is that the tourist stay for two or three days, but the feeling it leaves, it affects the mind-set of the entire area. Because that tourist is not part of the local milieu, he's an outsider. He's come to enjoy his weekend, he's come to enjoy his holidays, then goes back, but he leaves behind the impact. The whole psyche is dented for the village person. He says "why can't I have Scotch Whisky for drink? Why can't I smoke Dunhill?". So that takes him to crime. (E3)*

Participants L3, L4 and L5 have similar worries, in regard to public displays of affection

> *If somebody has very short clothes, if somebody very open, this is a negative point. […] some girls and boyfriend from foreigners are going there. They are kissing all over, any places. Then they ((the local girls)) are thinking this kind of things, after seeing this kind of things. (L3 and L4)*

or smoking.

> *The ladies smoking in the market. It is a problem. Everything is not good. (L5)*

Participant C12 not only worries about the children imitating bad behaviour, but also how this could affect the reputation of the entire village. This highlights that impacts of tourism development cannot be looked upon as having insular impact.

> *If the tourist is a family, we won't worry about that. If the tourism men are here and they drink, the children may try also. If this kind of thing happens regularly, then the whole village will be looked at badly, if this thing happens regularly. (C12)*

This group of participants in contrast is not worried about visitors setting a bad example to locals. They joke that in fact the opposite may be true.

The foreigner cannot [be] worse, because the villager is worse on that. They are smoking, they are [drinking] alcohol.

Researcher: So he's not scared that they could be a bad example for his daughter?

The villagers may be bad example for the foreigners ((laughter)). (L10-G)

Another participant (E9) thinks that social change brought about by tourism does not have to be a bad thing.

See, it depends on what you think is negative. I'm not one of those people who believe that culture is basically something that is put into a glass case and it's a vase that needs to be preserved very carefully. Culture is evolving! So along with changing technology culture will change. See all your present culture has grown from agrarian culture, from an agrarian lifestyle. After you harvest, you do this. Basically it's all based in the economics of the time, of that period. But that is going to change. I mean, culture is not something that remains static, it keeps evolving! […] Culture is something that evolves. And what do you want? I mean, don't you want your people to progress? Don't you want them to be able to enjoy the kind of opportunities and have the same kind of options as everyone else? So why take culture and push everybody down? I disagree with that argument. (E9)

4.2.3.3 Xenophobia

The following comments relate to the IDF project partners attending a local Chhau dance[13] in West Bengal, to which they had been invited by some members of the co-operative, and which caused some discontent in the community.

[13] Folk dance from Purulia district, West Bengal

Negative side, - people will start saying "he is doing this for his own profit", that is the negative side. "He is not creating jobs for other people". Like yesterday, many people were asking [if] they are doing this for their own benefit, [if] they will earn a lot of money from this - we will make personal profit of that. So that is a negative side. (C1)

When you go see the Chhau dance, you're comfortable, you're excited. The people ((wider community)) think "Why you come? Why? Do these people trap my culture?". These people - no communication skills, miscommunication maybe. (C8)

These comments show that even before any tourist activity had taken place, discontent among excluded members of the community emerged, who are confused, perhaps even frightened by outsiders coming in to their communities. The researcher then asked how such problems could be avoided:

By creating jobs for other people, you know. (C1)

So [we need] lots of training programs, lots of awareness programs. We [co-operative] have a plan. We will make a small film for the villagers. They see the film – 'This is the world, we are not Indian people, we are not German people, we are world people'. Our co-operative have a common friend, [he] make a small film and he say, you go to the village and show the film for the villagers for the development of the community or travel, tourism. This is film, this script, you see that. (C8)

The main negative impacts are grouped and presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 – Negative Impacts of Tourism

Negative Impact	Definition	Example	Participants
Discontent in wider society	Resentment Envy	*People will start saying "he is doing this for his own profit". (C1)*	*C26-G, L3 and L4*
Xenophobia	Fear of the unknown	*The people [wider community] think "why you come? Why? Do these people trap my culture?". (C8)*	C1, C8
Negative Behaviour	Drinking alcohol	*Some tourists are good, but drinking tourists are not good. (C17)*	C8, C10, C12, C14, C17, C18-G
Western Clothing	Not covering arms and legs	*Maybe the Western dress, because in our culture it is custom to cover all our parts of our body, but in Western culture it is different. (C6)*	C6, C7-G, C9
Imitating tourist behaviour	Alcohol consumption Socio-cultural	*The whole psyche is dented for the village person. He says "why can't I have Scotch Whisky for drink? Why can't I smoke Dunhill?". (E3)*	C8, C14, E3, E9

4.2.4 Potentially Positive Impacts

Discussing positive impacts was somewhat easier and participants spoke about various positive impacts they associate from engaging in tourism.

4.2.4.1 Increase Local Incomes

To all participants, the tourism development is clearly seen as an opportunity to create employment and increase local incomes, hence benefiting the whole community directly as well as indirectly from tourism (C1, C6, C9, C16, C17, C19, C20, C22, C26-G, L1, L8, L10-G, L7, E1, E5, E11, E12).

> *When I think of tourism first thing that comes to mind is income. We get little income from that we can support people, we can help people, when we can give them income, then definitely they will have better habits like alcohol, it's a good thing. It's a very good opportunity for us to remove that unemployment. (C6)*

In addition to increasing business for small shops or drivers, tourism may also open up other markets (C8, C16, C19, C20, C22).

> *I am a transporter, so I have this business already. If the tourists come here for me it is good because I will get more and more business from the society[14]. […] If tourists are here and you will definitely get more business, other people [will] also. If they have the money, then they will change their lifestyle. (C16)*

[14] 'Society' is used synonymously, with 'co-operative'

4.2.4.2 Stay in Village

Economic benefits are believed to consequently have a positive impact on society. For instance, it would present a chance to stay in the village and in this help to stop migration (C1, C9, C15, C17, C19, C20, C22, C26-G, E5, L1, L8), as the excerpts below show.

> *Suppose from the ecotourism, [a tourist] is staying here for about 10 days, so he give me about INR 500 per day, so in six days I get INR 3000. Right now I work for one month for INR 4000, is not enough. So if we get them ((tourists)) for six days they give me INR 3000 for a week. So I am about 20 days free, so we do some other things. We have many businesses here, per day we get INR 200 also, so we do some days for this work ((the tourism project)) and per month we take about INR 10,000*[15]*. Then we [would] like staying here.*
>
> > Researcher: That's why you want to develop tourism here, so you can stay in the village?
>
> *Yes! If tourism more, than we are very happy. For me and my other brother, we get more per cent business, not just me. (C9)*

> *Now we already have a job [farming and small business]. But if you come with the tourists, I will be very happy for that. If the tourists come here, then we don't go away from our village. We do work in village, we don't like go outside. If the tourists come, we get more business, so we stay here. (C9)*

> *Basically, we live in the village and we know each other and the community that's there. [We] want employment in the village. (C26-G)*

[15] Approximately £100 (May 2014)

Now we don't have any business in the village. If we [did], we will not leave the village, we will not migrate. (C27)

We can develop guesthouse as homestays. If the people will know they are getting money, those houses that are now waste for them, then maybe some people will come back. In the cooperative maybe someone will be a tour guide somebody taxi. After some time if these people feel they are earning good money…the houses are here, their fields are here…maybe they will stay here. (C19)

This does not mean that the positive impacts are exclusive to tourism and other business ventures could have the same effect; however, very few exist.

4.2.4.3 Families Stay Together

If people were able to stay in their villages, it would also allow families to remain intact (E1), because children could receive better education in the area (C15, C19) and because it could create employment opportunities in the future (C15, C26-G).

If you are young population, the bread earner is able to stay back: The whole family will benefit, because the children will get the guidance from the parents, the old age people will get the help from the children. In the long run, the whole community can benefit if the family will be able to earn for themselves and sustain a system within the local place. (E1)

Today this is for the community and ourselves also. Maybe we won't be able to get good profit, but if this happening, if tourism will happen, then we will not be worried for our future and our children's future. Maybe we won't be able to get everything now, but we will have a ground for our

children. […] But [more than] that tourism is necessary for our children, because they will learn so many things from the visitors. (C26-G)

Participant C15 lives in a nearby hub of her native village to look after her own and other villagers' children, so they can go to school. She tells of her hopes that tourism income could enable them to teach their kids in their own village.

I have two lives right now: I have to be here with my children, and the village life. If the tourists would be there, we can get money and other success also and knowledge. We could teach our children at home, we don't have to go outside to teach our children. If we do that, then half of the migration in the village can stop. And people who are young now, [could have] different kind of jobs. (C15)

As stated above, other business ventures could achieve similar benefits; however, some benefits emerged, which are distinctively connected to tourism, such as cultural exchanges.

4.2.4.4 Cultural Exchanges

Evidently, perceived benefits of tourism go beyond economic gains for many. Whereas to some (C6, C8, C14, L10-G, E3, E9) cultural exchanges had some negative connotations, other see cultural exchanges between locals and tourists as an opportunity to learn (C8, C12, C19, L1, L7),

When people come in our area we have lots of backdrops ((are behind)) like education, like behaviour pattern. Like the rest of the world is going to the moon, we are just sitting in the area. When tourists come, we [will be] also educated, we learn from tourists. That is the biggest profit. That is why we need the tourism. We need tourists, not for money actually, we

shall [offer] our product [at]minimum price. Just we have to change our life communicate rest of the world. That's why tourism is needed. (C8)

Our children will be very happy to see outside people. If they go walk with those people they can learn something. (C18-G)

for example in regard to developing their English language skills.

The development not only of the tourism: the development of the language, the people, as well as the meeting of the two countries. So very good, it's a good side. You come to know their culture, their basic habits. […] And they will be learning what a good culture we have. (L1)

To participant L2 and participant C27, of whom the latter recently had two English tourists stay with him, such encounters had a highly motivational effect.

Two, three tourists last [year], they are cleaning the way ((path)). So this path is for the villagers. […] The women or girls with heavy things on their heads, they will fall sometimes. So they ((the tourists)) have time here, because they are tourists. The locals are in the fields. So they are cleaning the path. So then, the other school boys and girls, started then to everyday clean this path. […] This is good for our society. (L2)

The latter recently had two English tourists stay with him.

The journalists want to learn how we make our food. And the other one wanted to clean the home, he did some cleaning work. So we are more aggressive now about cleaning our house, because the foreigner is

cleaning. This is my duty! Why don't I do it? So the next morning - the cleanest house! So we have this kind of awareness now, earlier we don't. (C27)

The following two participants have had interaction with tourists from a different tourism project in the area, ULIPH, discussed more in depth in Point ULIPH below, showing the positive impact these encounters have made. Participant C10 says the experience made her "feel good"

I have three or four rooms that we don't use. I didn't get much money, but the house is empty so it was a lot of money for us. I cook for them and what I knew I told him and I made some money so it made me feel good. […] I told a lot about language, the agriculture, of those things. (C10)

And similarly, participant C27 feels like they are now "developing".

We feel like we are going towards the city [progressing]. When the people from England were there, we try to speak in English. Even I spoken English. Now four, five young people who just finished their education at college, they have no job. Now they say we can join you and help and we will enjoy and love that. So last night they talk the little bit in English, they are laughing also, but they speak and include. Now we are developing like the city people. (C27)

4.2.4.5 Increased Confidence

As a result of interaction with tourists or *outsiders*, a perceived positive impact is that it may raise people's confidence (L3 and 4, C6, C10, C18-G, C27), with foreigners acting as role models

> *Our girls, after seeing the foreigner ladies or girls who comes here, they are more comfortable, because they seen them, buying everything, going everywhere. Then they think, we also go, we also can do. If she can do, why I can't do this? So she is trying to prove herself also. (L3 and L4)*

or because locals become more used to communicating with outsiders.

> *More communication skills, […] to develop respect, self-respect, psyching, get respect [from] other people. (C6)*

> *My age group ((18-25)), the locals are so shy, they don't talk to other people. If people come, then we have to talk in English, because the tourist doesn't know Hindi. So if people come here regularly we will learn that kind of thing without any training, just by spending time with them we will get education. (C18-G)*

The positive impacts presented above are condensed in Table 4.3, and then further discussed below.

Table 4.3 – Positive Impacts

Impact	Example	Participants
Economic		
Create local employment/ Raise local incomes	*It's a very good opportunity for us to remove that unemployment. (C6)*	All
Trickle-effect / help or open other markets	*…you will definitely get more business, other people [will] also. (C16)*	C16, C19, C20, C22
Socio-cultural		
Stay in village/ stop migration	*Now we don't have any business in the village. If we [did], we will not leave the village, we will not migrate. (C27)*	C1, C9, C15, C17, C19, C20, C22, C26-G, C27, E5, L1, L8
Preserve social structure/ family	*If you are young population, the bread earner is able to stay back: The whole family will benefit, because the children will get the guidance from the parents, the old age people will get the help from the children. (E3)*	C15, C19, C26-G, E1, E3
Children's education and future prospects	*If tourism will happen, then we will not be worried for our future and our children's future. Maybe we won't be able to get everything now, but we will have a ground for our children. (C26-G)*	C15, C19, C26-G
Cultural exchange	*You come to know their culture, their basic habits. […] And they will be*	C8, C12, C19, L1, L7

	learning what a good culture we have. (L1)	
Increase knowledge	*So if people come here regularly we will learn that kind of thing without any training, just by spending time with them we will get education. (C18-G)*	L2, C6, C8, C18-G
Raised confidence	*We feel like we are going towards the city [progressing]. (C27)*	L3 and 4, C6, C10, C18-G, C27

4.2.5 Specific Tourism Advantage

The above excerpts highlight the ways in which tourism could have a positive impact on the local community. However, except for aspects of cultural exchanges and interactions with outsiders, one may argue that any kind of employment opportunity would achieve similar benefits. The findings below highlight more specifically the distinctive advantage tourism, as opposed to any other business venture, may have in regard to rural development. One such advantage is described as being low in initial investment (C16, C18-G, C26-G, C27),

> *In the tourism case we don't have to invest any money from our pocket right now. (C26-G)*

but also simply because of an overall lack of alternatives (C18-G, C27).

> *We don't have a lot of opportunity there for other businesses. We need infrastructure, roads, communication, these kind of facilities for any kind of business. But in tourism it is not necessary. [...] We don't need a bigger office. Somebody from the village coming to Bageshwar can check e-mail*

or phone call here and then we know if the guests are here or not. In this field of tourism most of the villagers will benefit, with other businesses they may not. (C27)

Furthermore, villagers would be given the opportunity to turn existing resources, such as spare rooms, into money generating assets (C16, C18-G).

We don't have a lot of options, and we don't have a lot of money either. We have other choices also, like she has seven goats and she can sell them and make money, that is a source also. And he is making houses and can earn money, but if he wants to open a shop, he doesn't have that kind of money. So in this tourism sector we don't have to put money right now. What we have, we are only giving other person ((tourists)) the same thing. That is why it is not a burden to us. We are only using our resources, we are not doing any extra thing. (C18-G)

I don't need any money [to invest] right now, because I already have my cars. I also have a house in the village, so I could spare that as well. (C16)

The trickle effect is also mentioned (C8, C16, C19, C20, C21, C22, C27), i.e. in tourism most villagers will benefit in some way, which may not be the case with other businesses.

You can start other also but you need to do their ((other people's)) business. But they will just keep the money for themselves, they will not give it to the society or other villagers, because they invest their money and the benefit that [is] there, they will keep it to themselves. But if the tourists is here, not a single person will get money. Tourists will come - two other people will get benefit. It is a better way. (C21)

As briefly discussed before, tourism may also present a pull for the educated youth, who are looking for *white collar job* as opposed to farming activities.

4.2.5.1 White-collar Job

Only Participant E3 and E8 bring this up specifically, but, reflecting on the above point, this may still be an important factor in presenting viable employment opportunities.

> *Tourism could help a lot in diversifying, especially for males. Because they think that tourism is still a white-collar job. So they aspire to be with tourists, rather than going to the field, ploughing their own field. So I think there is a great opportunity for those educated children, maybe past class 9, class 10, class 11.*
>
> > Researcher: But mainly for men? Because they don't want to do the lower jobs?
>
> *Mainly for men. But it's the woman who really contributes to tourism in terms of, you know, cooking food. But for tourists, men also come forward to cook food, that is that. (E8)*

Summarised in Table 4.4 are the different ways in which tourism might have comparative advantage for rural development.

Table 4.4 – Distinctive Advantage of Tourism for Rural Development

Distinctive Advantage	Example	Participants
Low in initial investment	*In the tourism case we don't have to invest any money from our pocket right now. (C26-G)*	C16, C18-G, C26-G,C27
Lack of alternatives	*We don't have a lot of opportunity there for other businesses. (C27)*	C18-G, C27
Use of existing resources	*I already have my cars. I also have a house in the village, so I could spare that as well. (C16)*	C16, C18-G
Trickle effect	*[Other businesses]…the benefit that [is] there, they will keep it to themselves. But if the tourists is here, not a single person will get money. Tourists will come - two other people will get benefit. (C21)*	C8, C16, C19, C20, C21, C22, C27
White collar job	*Tourism could help a lot in diversifying, especially for males. Because they think that tourism is still a white-collar job (E8)*	E3, E8

4.2.6 Challenges

The participants believe there is potential in both states to develop tourism and can think of many ways in which tourism may have a positive impact on their lives and furthermore what distinctive advantage tourism may have. At the same time a variety of genuine challenges for tourism development in this context emerged from the interviews. Some of these challenges are external, such as cultural constraints related to the caste system (E10), planning issues (E6, E10, E12, E13) or a generally poor infrastructure (C5, C6, C7-G, C8, C15, C21 C9, C14, E6, E9). Others are internal, such as feelings of inferiority (C11, C12, C17,

C18-G) or lack of skills and language difficulties (C1, C5, C6, C8, C11, C15, C17, C19, C20, C24, E6, E13). These challenges are described below.

4.2.6.1 Planning Issues

General planning appears to be of concern to some (E6, E10, E12), who are disappointed by the lack of tourism development in their region.

> *Uttarakhand is only 10 years old, but sorry to say, there is no hard rules and commitment, there is nothing. In the 60s what they are doing - this just like that.*
>
> Researcher: They don't have tourism as a strategy?
>
> *No, nothing. Because there are many places very beautiful and very healthy, still they are not explored yet. In this area there is no planning for tourism, that's why I'm saying, my interest is, we develop something [and] it will develop everything and, economically, it will give mileage to people. Good things they can do, they are very hard-working, but they are not given any chance. Many people are coming from other areas and are using them. (E12)*

> *Tourism is our best employment [opportunity]. After 10 years ((10 years ago)) Uttarakhand state make. After 10 years, no any development in tourism. (E6)*

This is confirmed by the tourism minister for the Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand, who sees potential to develop tourism in a variety of sectors, whilst acknowledging some barriers, such as *insufficient visitor numbers* and *lack of publicity.*

In this area there are barriers [in] fields of tourism. Important sectors are village tourism, next is adventure tourism and third is that ecotourism.

Researcher: And how developed is this village tourism sector?

Visitor numbers are not sufficient, limited numbers are there. Some areas are well known for this type of tourist, just not enough. […] We don't have publicity. […]It is not a big market. (E13)

4.2.6.2 Infrastructure

As already addressed before, lack of road access is seen as a barrier (C9, C14, C19, E6, E9).

The lack of access and poor condition of the roads… If the area [was] connected by roads…this area is beautiful, best scenery. But not roads, not connected by rail. Roads are so bad. If tourist come and sit [in] taxi, his body ((re-enacts how person is shaken around by taxi)), he will not come back. (E6)

Actually we live off from the road[16]*. That is the main point will stop tourists. […] So when we get the road, so I hope, please, I get more business. But this time we don't have many facilities for tourists. You have seen the village. You see in the market you have everything available. But in the village, what we have you see. When we get the road we [will have] all facilities. That depends on the business. (C9)*

This is also the case for other infrastructure such as sanitation (C5, C6, C7-G, C8), as is the remoteness from water sources (C15, C21). Basic commodities such as adequate beds and bedding are also difficult to obtain to some (C15, C19).

[16] It is approximately a one hour hike to the village.

The biggest problem for some people for some villagers, we have homes but we don't have good beds, good beddings and other things. And we are hopeful if the road comes in the six or seven months it will be good. But it depends on the government. So that is a major problem, there are now no good paths at the moment. That we cannot make by ourselves. So that is the biggest challenge. (C19)

In this regard, a variety of challenges present themselves in regard to the viability of tourism development in both areas. A more serious issue presents itself in West Bengal, because of the distinct lack of sanitation (C5, C6, C7-G, C8), further discussed in Point 4.7.1.3 – Catering to tourist needs.

If we develop the tourism product, first of all our sanitation system is needed. (C8)

4.2.6.3 Inferiority Complex

In regard to internal barriers, feelings of inferiority were prevalent in some participants, mainly women (C11, C12, C17, C18-G), for example about the way villagers dress compared to people from the city,

The difference between us ((outsiders and villagers)) is, if somebody lives in the city, also smaller city, they wear cleaner [clothes than] us, because they don't have to work in the fields like us. And other thing, if people come to the village, we will be very scared. In the city the women go to the market, they shop for clothes, everything, so they are used to this. […] You ((researcher)) are looking so smart. So we also do something like that. We don't have to do as you, but we at least have to clean ourselves first. (C12)

But also because they have little to talk about except for their animals and fields.

> *If we stay in the village, we only see our animals and our fields, and we talk about that. But if somebody from the village goes to the city, they have seen lots of things, they have seen the ((inaudible word)) and clothes, so they will talk accordingly. They will not only talk about the bull and the grass, they will talk about other things also. (C18-G)*

4.2.6.4 Caste System

Cultural norms restrict scheduled castes[17] from taking part in certain community activities. How easily members of lower castes can be integrated in community based tourism development was brought up as a challenge by participant E10, who questions whether visitors from other cultures will be able to accept this.

> *In India the caste system is prevalent, sometimes someone from the outside cannot digest it, [but] that this is our culture. So some days we have these groups and the whole community comes together, so where we have homestays, so in the village there are members of the lower caste is well. So when we have the community day […] lower caste members cannot eat with the rest of the community, they are not allowed to prepare food that higher caste members eat, generally they're not allowed to eat at the same time. So that is the big difference between our culture, but we should not be judgmental and need to be open-minded about the caste system. (E10)*

4.2.6.5 Language

Contrary to what the researcher was told prior to embarking on her first field trip, language posed a major problem in the rural areas visited and working with an

[17] Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are among the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups in India
http://in.one.un.org/task-teams/scheduled-castes-and-scheduled-tribes

interpreter was imperative. This clearly poses a challenge for tourism developments, i.e. will make villagers who do no speak English dependant on those who do speak it. Many brought this up as a challenge that should be addressed through training (C1, C5, C6, C8, C11, C15, C17, C19, C20, C24, E6, E13).

> *I want to improve the language. I know names in Hindi, but not in English. If we make vegetables, if any tourist asks, I can tell them the Indian names, but I don't know the English names. These things we must learn. (C15)*

> *Language, nobody can speak in English. When somebody come from other countries they cannot understand. So some problem. (C24)*

Table 4.5 – Challenges and Barriers to Tourism

Challenges	Example	Participants
External		
Planning Issues	*In this area there is no planning for tourism […]. (E12)*	E6, E10, E12, E13
Caste System	*So when we have the community day […] lower caste members cannot eat with the rest of the community, they are not allowed to prepare food that higher caste members eat […] (E10)*	E10
Internal		
Inferiority Complex	*[…] if somebody lives in the city, also smaller city, they wear cleaner [clothes than] us, (C12)*	C11, C12, C17, C18-G
Skills/ Language	*Language, nobody can speak in English. (C24)*	C1, C5, C8, C11, C15, C17, C19, C20, C24
Infrastructure		
Road access	*Actually we live off from the road. That is the main point will stop tourists. (C9)*	C9, C14, E6, E9
Sanitation	*If we develop the tourism product, first of all our sanitation system is needed. (C8)*	C5, C6, C7-G, C8
Support items (e.g. bedding)	*[…] we have homes but we don't have good beds, good beddings and other things. (C19)*	C15, C17, C19

4.3 Tourism Key Points

The findings suggest that tourism is embraced as a development tool by locals as well as experts and government. This will be explored in depth in Chapter 5; however, we have already gained some insights: Tourism may cause socio-cultural difficulties when tourists do not adapt to locally acceptable norms of behaviour, or through cultural infiltration. At the same time tourism may create a variety of positive socio-cultural and economic impacts, mainly in regard to creating jobs and local incomes, which as a result may enable families to stay together and build a future for their children. In addition, cultural exchanges may increase locals' knowledge and skills. Distinctive advantages are the low need for initial investment and being able to make use of existing resources. Furthermore, tourism is considered a white collar job, which may help in holding back the educated local youth, who are looking for alternatives to farming. Still, tourism can by no means considered a panacea and both areas face a number of challenges, principally infrastructural challenges, planning issues, a distinct lack of language skills and confidence. The following sections will now turn to the findings on the co-operative as a business model in this particular context and delineate how it may help alleviate some of the challenges presented above, which to date have received little attention in the academic literature on the two topics within the same context.

4.4 Forming Co-operatives

Up to this point life in the villages has been explored. This has established that there is a need to develop alternative employment opportunities to combat the exodus of young men away from the villages and to the cities. Tourism seems to be a welcome industry for a variety of reasons, while also exposing a range of challenges and shortcomings in its practical application.

The following sections will aid in addressing Objective 3 – *To identify perceptions of and motivations towards forming tourism co-operatives and to outline the distinctive attributes associated with adopting a co-operative*

approach to tourism – and Objective 4 – *To gain an understanding of the practical implications of a co-operative approach to tourism.*

Predominantly, the voices of the members of the co-operative are presented here. Where appropriate, findings from experts are also used, when they help to create a broader understanding of an issue by integrating different angles, one from a macro, the other from a micro level. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the academic discourse on co-operative tourism is scarce. This study was not able to build on previous research or an existing framework, hence being guided by a strong exploratory element. This study looks at a network of tourism co-operatives in the early stages of their formation and prior to receiving notable numbers of visitors. It offers a unique opportunity to understand the motivation behind forming co-operatives and the structural challenges these face. Furthermore, insights can be gained in regard to the viability of the approach, by understanding what shortcomings exist and how they may be overcome, or if not, what lessons can be learned from this for future ventures of a similar nature.

4.4.1 Motivation to Join

Firstly, the researcher wanted to simply establish why people chose to join the co-operatives and were clearly asked so.

> Researcher:
>
> > So you are part of this co-operative now. Why? *(Int. with C12)*
> >
> > Why are you taking part in the co-operative? (*Int. with C6)*

Many participants (C2, C5, C6, C8, C12, C17, C19, C22, C26-G-G, C27) stated they want to '*progress'* (C2) or *'develop'* (C22) their region. The prospect of earning money is a clear incentive to some, if not for themselves, then for other members of the community (C1, C6, C9, C10, C14, C16, C17, C19, C20, C21, C22, C26-G). Others are motivated by the chance of improving their reputation by

being one of the *founding members* of the tourism co-operative (C3, C8, C17, C18-G, C22) or because it was believed to be low-in risk (C20, C22). Some mention that they want to build a future for their children (C12, C14, C17, C18-G). To many (C3, C8, C12, C13, C15, C17). *Shared knowledge* and the sense of *togetherness* played an important part, while others (C9, C11, C18-G, C19, C20, C22, C24) simply joined because *"everybody is now joining the co-operative and that is why [I] wanted to join too"* (C11). And of course for many it is a multitude of the above reasons, as the following excerpt shows:

Participant C19 wants to develop his area and earn money. The rest of his friends and family have left.

> *There is much scope for tourism in this area. I am a local man and I know a lot of things for tourists in this region. I want to increase or develop the local culture and improve people's earnings. That's why I joined […]. The villagers will benefit from the co-operative when the tourists are here. Most of [my] family and friends have left the village for nearby towns. So most of the people have left the village because there is no scope of education in no way, no business to earn money, so they left for nearby towns. Some are going to educate that child. Also out of the whole village maximum number of houses are empty. We can develop guesthouse as homestays. If the people will know they are getting money [from] those houses that are now waste for them, then maybe some people will come back. In the co-operative maybe someone will be a tour guide, somebody taxi. After some time, if these people feel they are earning good money…the houses are here, their fields are here, maybe they will stay here. (C19)*

4.4.1.1 Jobs/ Increase Income

The participants have already described the many ways in which lack of employment is impacting on their livelihoods. Therefore it is of little surprise, that the opportunity to create employment and generating income is a major motivator for the participants (C1, C6, C9, C10, C14, C16, C17, C19, C20, C21, C26).

> *[I] will help the people. It will help the village people, to do some betterment for people. You will help the people, to do something good for them, to create jobs. (C1)*

Creating jobs represents creating income opportunities.

> *So before, [I] didn't know much about those what kind of job to do. So when I heard about the project I thought [I will be] getting money also. (C19)*

And potentially this could stop people from migrating.

> *The local villagers. Now we don't have any business in the village. If we do, we will not leave the village, we will not migrate. (C27)*

In addition, an increase in earnings may create interest in locals to participate and come up with other ideas with which to grow their tourism market.

> *Will start giving jobs, will start giving people earn little money - little little, when [we] will provide them, then they will be more interested, they will try to be better, they will implement their own ideas to bring guests, tourist people. They will create a big market. It's a very big market as well*

> *as my mind is working. In the future it's a very big market for tourism I think. Good opportunity for people, the village people even, and other people to create jobs. (C6)*

And beyond the financial benefit from his role in the co-operative as a driver (*transport*), participant C16 believes there will be a spill-over effect for his other occupation as a shop owner.

> *Personally there are a lot of reasons. First, [I] have transport, so I will get more business. Other is, I have a shop, so any tourists going to the village has to buy everything from my shop. To the villagers also, they have vegetables, but everything else they have to buy here, so I will get maximum business out of this. (C16)*

Similarly, participant C10 sees additional opportunity to sell her crafts, for which there currently is no demand.

> *I can make wool things. Now I'm getting nothing from my art, but if the tourists will be here, I can make that for them. (C10)*

For participant C14 it may also make life a little easier, because he can sell his produce in his village rather than carrying it up to the nearest market, which is approximately an hour and a half away by foot.

> *I believe that if the co-operative is successful, then I can generate my income in the village rather than having to carry my produce up the hill to the nearest market. (C14)*

4.4.1.2 Improve community/ Self-improvement

Beyond an economic incentive, many explicitly expressed a strong wish to *improve the community* in general terms,

> *Yes, other members' life also improve. I am already earning good money, my problem is not money. I want the other people to get more money and they will increase ((improve)) life also. (C17)*

> *The best benefit is, whether the tourists come from any party, if they are there, ((the villagers)) will get knowledge. (C27)*

and, repeatedly mentioned, also through exposure to different cultures (C2, C5, C6, C17, C22, C26-G, C27).

> *By doing all the cDMO work here [I] will help the poor people here, they'll come to know about the foreign culture they would learn something about the people, it will help their lifestyle and they will earn something. So I will try to help people over here through the cDMO. (C5)*

> *Because I want to progress my region. […] How shall I say? People will give some extra earnings, culture, literacy. (C2)*

The opportunity for personal self-improvement and enhance ones reputation by being one of the *founding members* is expressed as an incentive (C3, C8, C17, C18-G, C22).

> *And I will get a name and fame also. I have started this project in this village. (C17)*

This includes being known about as a destination by the outside world or being *put on the map of India* (C1, C22).

> *Right now nobody knows, apart from the local people, of this area of Uttarakhand, about his beauty. So [I] joined the society because I not only want to grow myself. [I am] earning good money and to earn good money in the future also. By the society, if we will earn money, it is extra money. The other thing, if people know about this area, the society, the local area of the market, everything is known by the other people also. So I want to be a part of that, a member, a founding member, so I can say "we have made this. We have put Berinag as a historical place or tourist place on the map of India or the world". We will be very happy if we do this part, society, our area, our village. (C22)*

To participants C3 and C18-G, it was an incentive to meet foreigners.

> *[…] To interact with abroad people. And whatever we have, the monuments, the foreign [people] enjoy. And main thing is you will interact with the foreign people, to know their culture even. (C3)*

Here it may be added that the latter is from the scheduled cast[18] and hence most members of the community would not enter his house or eat his food. Receiving tourists unaware of or indifferent to his different status therefore represents a unique opportunity for him.

> *You are a foreigner, so now I have seen a foreigner. I already think I have achieved something. And main point, two things: We will get some*

[18] Historically disadvantaged people recognised in the Constitution of India

business also. And maybe we will learn something. I know our houses are not so clean, the path is not so clean, but when the guest come and pay so much money… We have to keep that in mind, so we will [clean] it for the guests. (C18-G)

4.4.1.3 Children's future

Picking up on a previously mentioned point, another incentive is that the project may enable people to school their children locally

Improve our culture, our family activities. I will get better life, because I would earn better money. I have two sons, they don't live with [me] because they go to school away from the village. They are staying with someone else, not their parents. If we have more money, then we can school [them here] also. More money, our lifestyle, the way we eat, everything will be changed. […] Others also, the community will benefit, not just me. (C17)

and/or provide a better future for them (C12, C14, C17, C18-G).

If tourists come we will not only develop ourselves but also the whole village. I have lived my life now, but my child is still growing. Entering the co-operative may be able to give my child a better future. This is my main motivation to join the co-operative. (C13)

Also, by being exposed to foreigners, the children can learn something.

If there [are] tourists we will get business also, we can educate our child better. Our children will be very happy to see outside people. If they go walk with those people, they can learn something. (C18-G)

4.4.1.4 Low financial risk

Being a low-risk venture is another reason why people decided to join (C20, C22).

> *There is no risk, because [I'm] not investing anything. I have my own job, I joined the co-operative only because I want to develop this area. (C22)*

Participant C20 believes the amount of earnings can only increase.

> *[I am] now 48 years of age. As a person can't loose anything with the society. I am earning money from my business currently also. If tourists, it will increase, it cannot decrease! So am earning money right now. But in the community, the co-operative society, I will get benefit from that also. Because of this business will increase. Second point is, 48 years old, if the project takes another one or two years I will be 50 years old. Maybe I will not like to go for long drives. So if the project in the village, I can do work for longer in the village. (C20)*

4.4.1.5 Because others are joining

Evidently participants clearly see a variety of benefits as shown above and this is the reason they joined. Then again it also emerged that many joined simply because others were joining (C9, C11, C18-G, C19, C20, C22, C24). This emerged from the interviews, but became further apparent through informal conversations and observations, where the researcher felt that the members acted on trust in or respect for individual leaders within their community, rather than making an objectively informed and independent decision.

> *My friends tell me about the society, so I say 'okay, I join your society'. He, [C17], asked me, he is my best friend. (C9)*

Everybody is now joining the co-operative and that is why [I] wanted to join too. (C11)

I joined because C17 told me about the project. I never thought about it, then I went to them and talked about the project, then I thought I have to join. (C18-G)

4.4.1.6 Trust in project partners

The fundamental mistrust in government projects was evident among participants and the wider community with whom the researcher engaged. Whereas some mistrust towards the IDF project was also present in some participant, to others an incentive to join was the fact that this project was not government-run and initiated by foreigners (C26-G, C27).

If any project is in India, launched by the government we only ask who was taking the money. But with the foreigners it is different, we believe they won't take anything from here, they want to develop. (C26-G)

We discussed it in the village and after work I decided to join, because they told us that the Scottish Government and Queen Margaret University went to develop tourism in this area. I thought, if they are trying to do this, we have to support them. If they can do something, why can't we? (C27)

4.4.2 Co-op Specific Motivations

The researcher asked the participants what motivated them to join this co-operative, and the above points have illustrated a variety of incentives. However, they do not explicitly point to the unique business structure being a factor in this. The following points, however, hint at ways in which the co-operative structure

may be of benefit in this kind of context, such as improved communication among villagers (C12, C15) or to pressure government as a group of people (C17).

4.4.2.1 Increase influence/ better communication among villagers

This participant is a young woman from the village who is employed by the government for one year only in a role to educate other women in the village about childbirth. She sees becoming part of the co-operative as an opportunity to continue on her mission and strengthen her influence on people, and furthermore, to share any knowledge gained from communication with tourists.

> *[I am] an employee of the government. From the village […] I only get INR 500 to start. Next year my role will change. This time ((now)), when I talk [to] the villagers some listen, some not. As part of the co-operative, we can help make people understand also. So for my job also, it will help to make people understand in the village. And with a group, if the tourists come or anyone and they tell us something, then we can share with each other and we can increase our knowledge. Then we can climb up step-by-step [to the] top. (C12)*

Another woman from the village mentions a similar aspect. In her opinion, being part of the co-operative will strengthen the natural village structure of people working together.

> *[I] want to achieve something for the community. I joined, because in the village, usually we are all together, we know each other. But if we are in a co-operative, we are like family members. In the village we are also like family members, [but] they have different views. If I'm a member of the society, I work with them. If I did it, but independently, I have my views only, as a co-operative we can talk with each other. (C15)*

An understanding of what motivated participants to join the co-operative are now more clear, as summarised in Table 4.6 – Motivation to Join below.

Table 4.6 – Motivation to Join

Motivators	Participants
To *progress* (C2) or *develop* (C22) the region	C2, C5, C6, C8, C12, C17, C19, C22, C26-G, C27
Earning money/ improving business/ create new markets	C1, C6, C9, C10, C14, C16, C17, C19, C20, C21, C22, C26-G
Improving their reputation as founding member	C3, C8, C17, C18-G, C22
Low-in risk	C20, C22
To build a future for their children	C12, C14, C17, C18-G
Because others are joining	C9, C11, C18-G, C19, C20, C22, C24
Opportunity to meet foreigners	C3, C18-G
Improve influence amongst villagers	C12
Trust in project partners	C26-G, C27
Improve communication amongst villagers	C15
Shared knowledge/ togetherness	C3, C8, C12, C13, C15, C17

Some insights to what makes a co-operative approach distinctively different have been gained, such as shared knowledge and a sense of togetherness; however, these are few and, for most participants, do not appear to be a major factor in their initial motivation to join. In answering Objective 4 – *To gain an understanding of*

the practical implications of a co-operative approach to tourism – the next section presents the findings, which identify the distinctive attributes associated with a co-operative tourism approach, and in this outline the advantage of such an approach.

4.5 Distinctive Attributes of Co-operatives

An understanding of the distinctive attributes emerged naturally during the interviews or were prompted by the researcher, asking the participants specifically if there was an advantage to co-operatives over other kinds of businesses or over 'working alone':

> Researcher: And what do you think is the benefit of being part of the co-operative, rather than doing this on your own? *(Int. with C27)*

To some of the participants, predominantly from West Bengal, this appeared to be a difficult question. Even when questions were simplified, answers remained vague.

> Researcher: Do you think the co-operative is different than other businesses? For example: You could develop a homestay on your own. How do you think the co-operative is better, or maybe not better?
>
> *It is better, is better. Why? Because people in my area will not migrate for work. (C2)*

Nonetheless, a variety of distinctive attributes emerged. In parts a reflection of participants' motivation to join, these are expressed as shared knowledge, skills and assets (C9, C10, C14, C17, C18-G, C19, C24, C26-G, C27) shared benefits (C21, C22, C24, C27), as well as an overall sense of togetherness (C8, C10, C15,

C17). Participants also talk about the benefits of being able to solve problems as a group of people, by mututal support (C6, C8, C10), but also mutual monitoring (C8, C11, C12, C16). Furthermore, having group power extends into areas not directly associated with the co-operative tourism development, such as bargaining power with government, for better roads and general support, and buying power (C17, C26-G, C27). In addition, raised confidence was already evident in some participants (C8, C18-G, C26-G) as well as proactively thinking of other ways to improve their livelihoods (C8, C26-G). Of course, some of these findings are largely theoretical, as at the time of the interviews the villages had not received any tourists from the IDF project, other than perhaps the researcher, and participants were eagerly awaiting their arrival.

4.5.1 Shared Knowledge, Shared Skills, Shared Assets

Sharing, exchanging and increasing one's knowledge and skills were expressed as important factors or benefits of being part of a co-operative (C9, C10, C17, C18-G, C19, C24, C26-G, C27).

> *In the co-operative we have people who know some things better than us, then what I make. So with the co-operative I can learn from them, and they can learn from each other also. (C10)*

> *As soon as tourists ((are here)) we will get money, also we will get knowledge sharing also, we will benefit. (C19)*

Some do not only see mutual support, shared assets and shared knowledge as a benefit, but as a necessity (C9, C10, C14 C17, C18-G, C19, C24, C26-G) in order to be able to provide the various services to meet tourist needs, such as transport, cooking, tour guiding,

First, if we do anything, if a single person is doing it - they need everything. If we do it as a co-operative or group of people, we have a lot of things, somebody has one idea, somebody has another idea, we can talk and discuss. The other thing, if some tourist comes and drinks here and in somebody's house they don't have man, as a co-operative [we] can solve that problem also. And we would love for the tourists to be here, but for this we have to get together. (C10)

as well as sharing basic commodities like bed sheets.

I have transporter. Yes, someone can do the tour guide, he has homestays, you have seen them. Maybe they can improve, but if somebody stay then we can fix problems. When we know the tourists or guests are coming to this village, first night you will stay in his home, next night you will stay in another home. Also, maybe the next person doesn't have a bed sheet. He ((another person)) has bed sheet, so you can share them with the others.

Researcher: Right now, is it difficult for people to invest money to buy bed sheets?

No, no! We can share with each other. (C17)

Participants C18-G explain that the various skills people have need to be pooled together and also highlight the advantage of being able to solve problems as a group of people.

We can't do anything as a single person, we need support. We need a group of people, because we don't know anything about tourism. [If] there is any problem - we are ten people together - we can solve it. That's why we join together. Is that he can make bread, but somebody else can cut the vegetables. After that they can get the guest, they can earn the money.

Suppose you send in people, you can't do ten people ((as an individual)). If the community is together, they can share. (C18-G)

Especially if a lot of tourists come more people are needed.

A single person could not manage this tourism development. If only one tourist comes they can manage, but if more people come they need more people as a porter, as a guide, to cook food. You need a group of people. (C14)

We don't have so much ideas and companies. The society gives you help, good. If it's personal ((one person)) it's too hard, hard, no can do, it's very, very difficult. (C9)

Everyone has something the next person may not, in regard to facilities

So the reason why we have the co-operative or are a group of people is because everyone has not all the facilities. Somebody has something, somebody has something. To fill out all the requirements they need to co-operative. (C19)

and also skills.

People have different kinds of arts. Someone has a taxi. They would do the taxi. As a co-operative we can tie up with other hotels and businesses. Somebody has knowledge about tourism, he can discuss with the locals and make them understand about tourism. They can give this kind of support. (C24)

4.5.1.1 "Milkar" - Togetherness

A distinctive attribute of being part of a co-operative is the feeling of *'togetherness'* (C8, C10, C15, C17). Participant C10 talks about how the members have started making decisions together, whereas they used to do these things separately in the past.

> *Before the society everybody is doing separate, but now as part of the society we co-operate and we decide together how we will sell, to whom we will sell. Earlier we are doing separate, now we are doing together. […] Together – Milkar[19]. That means 'joined hands'. (C10)*

The unity and associated strength a group of people can have is furthermore expressed.

> *That's why the cooperative is so helpful for us. Because all the people are coming together and they want to work together. (C8)*

> *I thought about co-operative: main purpose is unity. Unity is very strong, One person working is not. Unity is good first of all. (C17)*

This is echoed by participants C15 and C17, who believe that the family-like structure of the co-operative is a benefit.

> *[I] joined, because in the village usually we are all together, we know each other, but if we are in a co-operative, we are like family members. In the village we are also like family members, [but] they [can] have*

[19] Hindi word. Literal translation: to cooperate.

different views. If [someone is] a member of the society, she works with them. If she did it independently she has her views only, as a co-operative they can talk with each other. (C15)

In the co-operative you can have only one member from one family. But the whole family is the support structure. If you can't attend, maybe his brother will attend. (C17)

4.5.2 Shared Benefits

An advantage of working as a co-operative is also that not a single person will benefit, but all of its members as different people will be needed to cater for the various needs of tourists.

If the tourists is here not a single person will get money. Tourists will come - two other people will get benefit. It is a better way. (C21)

More people engage in this project, somebody making food, as a co-operative member, somebody covers traveling side. Some benefits are earning money, then making some things - handicrafts, porter may be in use… We will benefit. (C24)

Participants C27 and C22 furthermore believe that the wider community will also benefit, because the co-operative tourism project will create a new markets, for example selling crafts

So if they know this thing, in the future they can co-operate in many ways. They can support each other because everybody has something the other doesn't have as somebody may know how to make the basket, some people know how to make the carpet… So right now they're not doing these

things, but they know how. Because they don't have any market. And if there was a market, they wouldn't know how to sell it. So we can make the villagers aware and everybody will get something. (C27)

and therefore enable non-members to get business too.

Not only the society people will benefit, the other people will also benefit. It is not necessary when the tourist comes, that they will take the society taxi, they might take another man's taxi also. Maybe the tourists want to stay in the hotel, so that person also benefits. (C22)

4.5.3 Mutual Support and Monitoring

Being part of the co-operative represents mutual support (C6, C7-G)

They are supporting me, I am supporting them, whenever I can do. Co-operative means I think to co-operate each other. (C6)

We love to have the co-operative. […] If we were collectively we can definitely help people better, we can ask guests to come here more collectively. All over the district, if people say they are needed, they are ready to go over there and help. (C7-G)

and could help with solving problems, in regard to tourists (C12),

If those things happen in the village, if the co-operative is there, they can make sure and make understand that they can't do that in this village. People here also drink, but they drink at home, not outside. So if the tourists drink in their room it's okay. If they drink outside of the room in

the village, then we have a problem. Then the co-operative can say what they can do, what they can not do. (C12)

as well as among villagers, by making decisions as a group of people (C11, C16).

Benefits of the co-operative are that one person alone cannot tell the others in the village "do this and do that". But if a group of people work together, they can make other villagers understand what they need to do. Sometimes people in the village do not agree with each other, but the co-operative is ten or fifteen people and discuss problems with each other and find agreement. That is the main benefit. (C11)

If we can work together… For instances, shop,- he will do separately ((on his own)). But if the community works together, - the single person will only think of his own knowledge, but if they discuss it as a group, they can make much better decisions. (C16)

To participant C8 this also means 'monitoring' each other in a sense.

If the tourists come we don't [cause] him into trouble. But one man doing homestays [alone], maybe he [could cause] problem. You don't communicate the transport or, you don't [inaudible]. The co-operative is about lots of members. When I do something bad you say to me: "Hey, why you do that?". (C8)

4.5.4 Group Power

Beyond benefits directly related to the tourism development project, participants see benefits of being a group of people in other areas of their lives, such as pressuring government e.g. to improve road access (C17, C27)

> *[My] wife is a village ambassador, just one more year. That's why I thought I make a group of people, and then we can pressure the government, for example with the road. (C17)*

or getting better prices for seeds (C26-G).

> *We can help each other through the co-operative. For example, if I need grains, we can get good prices because we are a group. So one person can go to the market and buy seeds and distribute it, so not everybody has to go. And we have the same point with selling also. Then we can sell it in good quantity, not 5kg, but maybe 100kg. (C26-G)*

4.5.5 Raised Confidence and Fostering Proactive Thinking

While perhaps not entirely accountable to the co-operative structure as such, some participants (C6, C22, C27) mention aspects that highlight the potential of the entire project to raise people's confidence and give them a sense of achievement. Whereas before the project had started people felt unlucky to have been born in the area, the opposite is now true, according to participant C27.

> *Before the last three years, we ((the villagers)) were asking, 'why were we born here?'. We were angry. Other people are somewhere else and learn things. After the last year, when the training from the co-operative was here, we feel we are fortunate. We don't want to live in the city with the pollution of the cars, where you don't have time for each other. Now we think we are very lucky we are born here and in this area and we don't want to leave. Before, we thought about it a lot. (C27)*

To be 'known about' is repeatedly mentioned as a positive result of the project.

Maybe now some people know about Dhoor[20], people will know about our particular area. So if this place is known if tourism starts, we will be very happy. Because people even in Bageshwar and our area they don't know about Dhoor or Kermi. Because they have limited sources of information. (C26-G)

We will give a very good name to our district. It is proud for me, you know. (C6)

Perhaps as further result of raised confidence, some evidence emerged that forming co-operatives have fostered proactive thinking among some, such as diversifying their activities.

Through this co-operative we have collected potatoes and distributed to the members. Now the crop is ready, now through the co-operative we will sell it also. (C26-G)

When you go to Kashmir there is a tourism called tulip tourism. In other areas there is tea tourism. Why not Lac tourism? Those people work with the Lac, so we promote the Lac tourism. (C8)

4.6 ULIPH

Note should be taken of a separate Indian government-run and -funded project that is taking place in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, which was briefly touched upon above. The Uttarakhand Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalayas (ULIPH), also known as 'Aajeevika'[21], aims to find sustainable ways

[20] Dhoor is the most remote and inaccessible villages partaking in the project in Uttarakhand.
[21] 'Livelihoods' in Hindi

to improve the livelihood of vulnerable groups in the Himalayas by creating opportunities for people to enhance their livelihoods (UGVS, 2013)[22]. Similar to the co-operative principles, the project applies principles of self-help and uses self-help groups. One of the main differences between the two projects is that ULIPH has provided extensive infrastructural support, such as turning derelict buildings into guesthouses. The IDF project in contrast puts much more emphasis on self-help. Basic training on key tourism and hospitality skills had been given to local leaders, who were then expected to train others in the co-operative. In essence, however, the co-operative members were expected to organise themselves to turn their houses into homestays through their own efforts and populate the internet portal that had been provided with pictures and text. ULIPH was operating in one of the villages, Dhoor, in which one of the co-operatives is operating and where participants C24, C26-G and C27 live. ULIPH had linked up with tourism enterprise Village Ways for marketing and bookings, and through this brought in small number of tourists.

The researcher was interested in finding out what impact the presence of an alternative development project had on the co-operative and if it affected village life in any way. In addition, the researcher wanted to find out what made locals join the co-operative instead of the ULIPH project. Through this a deeper insight into the distinctive attributes of co-operative tourism and the benefits, or challenges, of adopting a co-operative approach was expected to be gained.

4.6.1 Competition

According to C27 there appears to be little distinctive difference between the IDF project and ULIPH, other than the latter bringing in tourists. While there was initial discontent from ULIPH in regard to the Scottish team staying in their homestays, this problem had been resolved with a change in leadership. At the

[22] http://www.ugvs.org/AboutUs_ULIPH.html

time the interviews took place, the whole village had agreed to charge the same prices, irrespective of their affiliation. By doing so, this minimised the risk of competition amongst villagers, who, according to participant C27, will all benefit in some way in the end.

> Researcher: If ULIPH is already there, how do you think the co-operative will work alongside? Will there be competition?

We had this problem. Somebody said this. ULIPH said 'this is our property you can't stay here, you can't do that'[23]*. At that time somebody else was the president of ULIPH. Right now they have an agreement that if they want to use the properties of ULIPH, like when ((project manager)) was there, they can. The profit will go to ULIPH, but they have made this agreement.*

> Researcher: Can you tell me a little more about how the cooperative is different from ULIPH?

Now we are getting guests from ULIPH, that is the difference. But they have been working here for seven years. So we need guests from you also, there is the major difference. (C27)

> Interpreter: So if ULIPH is charging INR 1000 per night and they have given all this infrastructure, but the co-operative has not given infrastructure, how can we ((the co-operative)) charge INR 1000 per night?

We can charge it because the villager will know that everyone wants to benefit. We decided with each other, we charge INR 1000, everybody will charge INR 1000. Nobody will charge less, whether he has benefits or not, good facilities or better facilities. So there is no competition. Late

[23] He refers to the IDF project managers staying in the village for training purposes.

yesterday, two gentlemen for England were there, he stayed there 12 days. So they pay INR 3 lakh, with everything taking care of from England to here. The other thing: Village Ways is doing marketing. They haven't agreed amount with Village Ways. Village ways will give them INR 950 per guests. Until next March village ways will give them lots of customers. […] But he doesn't know how much village ways really charges from the guests. Maybe they are charging 1000 […]. (C27)

4.6.2 Co-op Advantage

While to participant C27 the difference between the two projects was not very distinct, participant C24 highlights the advantage of independent decision-making and taking ownership of these.

ULIPH is government undertaking, our co-operative is not government undertaking. We can change, it is not so regularised. And ULIPH money comes from infrastructure development. With us, our decisions are ours. (C24)

At the same time he thinks that the IDF project should allocate resources for local marketing.

Some budget must be for the local level marketing, like signs from the roadside – anything for the local level marketing. Only web portal – someone not opening the web…. Local level, other sources. Some budget must be for local level marketing advertising for our co-operative. With ULIPH so many boards are there. (C24)

Participants C26-G are more critical of ULIPH, who, in their opinion, have achieved very little despite providing infrastructural support.

They ((ULIPH)) have been doing work for four or five years now, they have lots of money. This is the project of the Uttarakhand government, so they are giving the money, buying sheets, giving solar panels, but still nobody gets the benefit out of this. There is no marketing. Our heart is good, because we have nothing, but we [have] marketing. We don't have infrastructure, but we have something in our hands that we think will go ahead. (C26-G)

4.6.3 Joint Benefit

Ultimately, participant C27 believes the village will benefit either way

One of the best benefits from the society is… Earlier they had a lot of problems… You are giving some training to us and ULIPH also gave some training. If we combine, put aside government or private, we can sit together and state: "What have you learnt?". They can tell us, and I can share what we have learnt. So we can exchange the knowledge that we have gained from two different parts. So this is the benefit for all the villagers. Maybe the parties are different – ultimately the village people will develop their skills. […] If the cooperative and ULIPH join hands then good. If not also good, because the villager will benefit. The best benefit is, whether the tourists come from any party, if they are there, they will get knowledge. (C27)

ULIPH had already brought a group of tourists to the village. Upon enquiring about this it was clear how much people embrace having visitors to their village, through whom they can increase their knowledge and language skills and which furthermore could present an opportunity for young people to find work in the village.

> *They feel like they are going towards the city ((becoming like city people by increasing their knowledge)). When there were people from England were there, we try to speak in English. Even I spoken English. Now for five young people who just finished their education at college, they have no job. Now they say we can join you and help and we will enjoy and love that. So last night they talk the little bit in English, they are laughing also, but they speak and include. Now we are developing like the city people. Now everybody people come tremendously I want to join – ULIPH. (C27)*

While both projects provided an opportunity for locals to benefit, from the interview one distinctive difference emerged: Autonomy over decision-making and ownership of these. More distinctive attributes are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 – Distinctive Attributes of Co-operative Tourism

Definition	Example	Participants
Shared knowledge, Shared skills, Shared assets	*In the co-operative, we have people who know some things better than us, then what I make. So with the co-operative I can learn from them, and they can learn from each other also.* (C10)	C9, C10, C14, C17, C18-G, C19, C24, C26-G, C27
Togetherness	*That's why the cooperative is so helpful for us. Because all the people are coming together and they want to work together.* (C8)	C8, C10, C15, C17
Shared Benefits	*More people engage in this project, somebody making food, as a co-operative member, somebody covers traveling side. Some benefits are earning money, then making some things – handicrafts, porter may be in use… We will benefit.* (C24)	C21, C22, C24, C27
Mutual support	*They are supporting me, I am supporting them, whenever I can do. Co-operative means I think to co-operate each other.* (C6)	C6, C8, C10
Mutual monitoring	*The co-operative is about lots of members. When I do something bad you say to me: "Hey, why you do that?".* (C8)	C8
Problem solving	*Benefits of the co-operative are that one person alone cannot tell the others in the village "do this and do that". But if a group of people work together, they can make other villagers understand what they need to do.* (C11)	C8, C11, C12, C16

Group power (government, buying power general)	*That's why I thought I make a group of people, and then we can pressure the government, for example with the road.* (C17)	C17, C26-G, C27
Raised confidence	*Now we think we are very lucky we are born here and in this area and we don't want to leave. Before, we thought about it a lot.* (C27)	C8, C18-G, C26-G
Fostering proactive thinking (Inspiring other business ideas)	*Through this co-operative we have collected potatoes and distributed to the members. Now the crop is ready, now through the co-operative they will sell it also*. (C26-G)	C8, C26-G
Autonomy	*We can change, it is not so regularised* (C24)	C24
Ownership	*With us, our decisions are ours*. (C24)	C24, C26-G

4.7 Practical Implications

Aiming to further answer Objective 4 – *To gain an understanding of the practical implications of a co-operative approach* – this section moves away from the up to now more theoretical discussion into the practical application of the co-operative tourism project. The researcher asked participants about activities, which the co-operative had undertaken. Questions revolved around what short- and long-term goals had been set, what the individual members were trying to achieve by being part of the co-operative, how determined members were to get organised and try to achieve something, by attending meetings for example, and also which role they would take on within the co-operative (e.g. homestay provider or driver). The

answers were aimed at clarifying and deepening the understanding on how these newly formed co-operatives operate, and also provide a better insight into some of the practical issues and their implications in regard to the viability of the approach.

Overall, the answers reveal clear lack of strategy within the majority of participants. Some haven't thought of goals at all, as exemplified by these participants:

> *Right now I haven't thought about that. (C16)*

> *I don't know. […] I didn't get the proposal, I'm waiting for that. (C4)*

Overall, there is a sense of 'waiting' (C3, C4, C13, C15, C16, C24, C26-G) and a need for leadership (C1, C4, C6, C7-G, C8, C9, C15). This will be discussed at the end of this section. First, findings showing evidence of some initiative and active thinking about how to cater to tourists needs, improving infrastructure, marketing, and ways in which members can contribute to the co-operative, will be discussed.

4.7.1 Goals and Initiative

Whilst enthusiasm is clearly there, when asking about any kind of short- or long-term goals, the answers remained vague. The co-operative principles emphasize self-help and empowerment and the interviews aimed at identifying evidence of this from members, for example in terms of initiative. Again, whereas participants seemed eager to improve their livelihoods, there was little evidence of organised attempts to do so and only a few meetings had taken place. Overall, no coherent vision emerged. Goals appeared big, but were lacking specific steps on how to reach them

Right now we only have 11 members on the board, but in the villages we have a lot more people who have different type of things. After a while we will make the whole village as a model village for tourism in this area. So it will be an achievement. Not only guest and we have to make money, money. We also have to save our culture. We have to make all these things and get money and then it will be successful. (C19)

However, as sufficiently outlined before, receiving tourists is a common goal. Participants C6 and C24 talk about talking small steps, such as joining more people to the co-operative, developing homestays and receiving small numbers of guests.

Main aim is growing the livelihood, all people, members of the co-operative society, and first to start the small-scale business and after that increasing the business. But first, we start small-scale, not large-scale. And limited facility homestay, and then, after the benefits, depends on the benefits and how many tourists come, then we develop our ability. First we try to join people to the co-operative. (C24)

Participant C6 appears highly motivated to take action and believes that with hard work they can gain international recognition, something he would be take great pride in.

If we develop cDMO we are the luckiest ones. I will work for that. And in this crucial time we will try to develop things like homestay. And in the next six months I think I should have one guest, you know. I will work for that. […] I think this three months are crucial for all of us. It's a big challenge. Because three months can give an international name to our district. So we people who are related with the cDMO should all work

hard to give international name to our district. And I think this three month decide things, whether we are in this market or not. Because people invest a lot of time. If you invest time, then I think you can do good thing, get good result. […] There is no limitation, there's lots to learn, lots to do on cDMO. Because unless you put in work, you don't get anything, unless you do action. So we will work for that, we will take action. (C6)

At the same time, he mentions the constraint of having to look after his own business first.

First I have to look after my own biz – is my personal profit. I look after my business first, but if I get time I look after the cDMO. Because it's my dream thing. For small cases I don't leave my business. If it's a big issue, then definitely I'll think [about it]. (C6)

4.7.1.1 Informing other villagers

While discussions on specific goals and initiative were somewhat difficult, there were examples of members becoming active, for example by sharing information with other members of the community,

Earlier people don't know about the co-operative itself. First, we have to tell about the bylaws, the rules of the society, who can be a member, who cannot be a member, what is the role of the secretary... Right now people ask '"what are you now doing?. Now that we have started the society, we have paid our joining fees…what are you doing now?". So I will tell them that the project is doing the portal right now and after that we will get something. (C19)

When we are trying to make people are members, we have to tell them about our projects, our needs. We should not tell them you have to join. Maybe they will join, but after a while he may drop out because he doesn't want to. So you shouldn't force anyone, but we try to be honest. (C26-G)

especially to reduce resistance and mistrust from those who are not part of the co-operative (C8, C19, C22, C26-G).

So first we have to talk to them ((the villagers)), we have to talk about the project – it is not disturbing the village life. So there are twenty people now, maybe if tourists comes, fifty people do not agree. They might say "don't walk to my field". So first thing we have to talk to all the villagers. It should be the first thing. Then, we have to focus on only one village right now, then if everybody wants to do this, if it will be a success. (C22)

Currently people are talking: "You were doing this kind of thing, the Scottish government is helping you." Other people in the market are saying: "How much money are you getting? Why did they choose this area?" This kind of things. So we try to tell them and maybe they will understand. (C19)

This local coordinator talks about the difficulties of sharing information about the project with the community. He is involved in theatre productions, which he has found to be a useful medium of communication.

I share with the members everything: "This is happening, this is wrong or right", I share. But all the members are average ((not well educated)), so sometimes she can't communicate with me, so that this problem. […] Then I have a theatre play, then they understand. (C8)

4.7.1.2 Co-op activities

Beyond informing and reassuring villagers and co-operative member, evidence of other activities of the co-operative emerged. Here, members talk about organising meetings, discussing

> *Normally what happens, if they wanted discussion tomorrow, then one person will announce this - 'Please come tomorrow'. So the next day, from every house one single person should be there. The ladies will also participate. 'This is what we want to do, how we have to do it. People discuss, some disagree. Maybe after we have one point, so we stick with that point. (C17)*

and coming to agreements.

> *We have to fight together for that. Some private people are also doing that, but we say we don't go privately, we go together. Collectively we will go. (C7-G)*

Furthermore, organisational structures appeared to be in place and these were clear to the local coordinators.

> *When we formed the co-operative. Everybody gave a little bit, share Rs.100.*
>
> Researcher: And who is in charge of the money? You take care of the money?
>
> *No, no, a treasurer.*
>
> Researcher: And who decides how you spend it?

Board members are seven members, they decided, we share one Lakh. Gradually it will fill up, when the tourists come. (C8)

While some interest from potential guests had started, the members were still unsure on how much to charge them and also, how to fairly distribute tourists amongst the members.

Presently not large work, but starting at the moment. Four or five phone calls from other areas of India started. India, little ((some)) tourist called to me: "When can we come to your home state?" […] If the tourists are less, then there may even be conflict in the society itself. Why? When the first tourists [come] we will put them in the homestay that are well accommodated, clean. Some part of the income will be invested in the co-operative also. We have not decided how much we will take. (C24)

Discussions at meetings also revolve around what will happen after the IDF project is officially handed over to the co-operative and how the co-operative can achieve its goals if on-going support cannot be provided by the project partners.

If we will not get support… Right now we're making more membership also. First of all we will have a meeting and discuss about the project. What will happen after 31st of March ((2013, when the IDF project ended))? […] If they don't support us financially, they have to support us someway. If the query is coming from the guest, so someone needs to be capable to reply the question. So my basic point is, they ((the project partners)) have to support some ways. How they will do – we are waiting for that. […] Definitely we benefit from the portal, because when you're not giving money directly to the villagers, you do tell them how to go ahead, how to treat the guest, that kind support you are giving. The other is, in future also we don't need any money, if the business is growing, if the

tourists are coming and we are getting good money, then if we want to make a room here, we need four or five lakh for that. We need finance for that. So how we can achieve that we need to think also. (C26-G)

4.7.1.3 Catering to tourist needs

Some of the participants are thinking about ways in which they can cater to tourists' needs (C5, C6, C7-G, C8, C15, C17, C19, C20, C22), for example learning about first-aid and English names for local vegetables (C15),

First thing is first-aid kind of thing. Because in the village people don't have. They have to go up the road, climb up. So first thing, [I] want to learn a little bit about first-aid. Second I want to improve the language. I know names in Hindi, but not in English. If we make vegetables, if any tourist asks, I can tell them the Indian names, but I don't know the English names. These things we must learn. (C15)

or about local places of interest (C19, C22), as well as setting up shops (C20). One participant (C17) talked about creating guidelines for tourists.

I can put on portal, when you come to my house don't drink in our village. (C17)

Lack of any kind of sanitation presented a real problem in West Bengal. Addressing this is mentioned as one of the most immediate goals by several participants (C5, C6, C7-G, C8).

We are ready to welcome people. We have little problem with sanitation. We will manage clean sanitation. Our co-operative formation is only six months, so not enough time to make sanitation work, but we are

discussing, then we will try to do in coming two or three months, even six months. […] In this area people make the sanitation work like bathroom little far from the house, maybe 100 meter or 50 meter. So I think the foreign people will manage that. (C7-G)

The first problem is sanitation. So I'm in contact with the district manager, we try to make solution for that. You know if you [generate] INR 400 the government will give you INR 1200 for the sanitation. (C5)

Participants C19 and C22 have already taken initiative in learning about local places which could be of interest to tourists.

We have lots of things. First, we have to collect ((learn about)) these things for ourselves, for the co-operative members. Like about the fields, the waterfall, when there is a lot of water. When not, what is the background history on it. Then we can have a list of our things, so we have a lot of cases for the tourists. So first we have to collect all these details with photograph, after that we have a lot of options [for marketing], like through the magazine and newspapers. (C22)

Participant C19 also portrayed awareness of aspects, which were covered in training sessions, on cleanliness and the need for basic commodities, such as bed linen.

We know a lot of things that we hear from our fathers and grandfathers. At the moment I am just walking to see these places and increase knowledge on them. […] I'm ready. But you have seen our home in Berinag and our village also. If we know tomorrow any guest is coming, I can call my sister or mother in the village and [tell them to] move the stuff out of the room

and make the bed little bit better and they can do it. And before the guests [come], we can clean up toilets also. […] We have everything available: Bed sheets, pillow covers, blankets. (C19)

Another participant is thinking of opening small shops at strategic points.

We have lots of things here for the tourism, the waterfall and other places. So if tourists are there we can develop these areas, for example we could make a shop there near the waterfall. Somebody will be there, somebody will earn money also at the road head and in the village. So everybody gets something. (C20)

4.7.2 Member Roles

The researcher asked all participants what role they would play in the co-operative. Some had specific ideas, such as the role as secretary,

[I] know my duties as a secretary. I have to do all the paperwork, I have to tell the villagers about what they are doing and what they have planned for the future and how they can run the project. So I'm discussing with other people. (C19)

working as a driver (C16),

Yes, main business right now is [my] shop. In tourism as a transporter, I have two or three vehicles, I'm the only one in this society who has these vehicles, so I will be transporter. (C16)

tour guide (C9)

Yes tour guide I like, more interesting. (C9)

or using their house as a homestay (C4, C14, C18-G). Some were open to engaging in a variety of ways (C3, C4, C7-G, C10, C14)

I will work for homestay also, because I am in construction. And second thing is, current travel, you'll support that. (C4)

or were uncertain about their specific role (C6, C13, C20):

Currently the co-operative has not decided who will do what, because no tourists have been here. I see two or three options. For example, if the person was responsible for making food is ill or not in the village, then I could also make food. I could also do porter work or any other kind of labour work. (C13)

Doing some job up here, maybe taxi, maybe farming. We will discuss, we will take one or two hours every week for this, then we know each other very well also. We already, but we are discussing, then we can decide some main points. (C20)

Even when roles where more clearly defined, the specific characteristics of the position remained vague.

((Local coordinator:)) I consider myself an operational person, I'm another type of stakeholder, like catering, like make itineraries, overall. […] My role is so dark, because my community, in my district, because I

deal with Scottish people, Dunira people, and I deal with Yes Bank, the corporate guys, and I deal with the illiterate person. And I make my dream. It's a bigger problem. (C8)

[I am] the president. (C15)

Researcher: And what do you have to do as the president of the co-op?

I want to achieve something for the community. […] My main role in the society is to bring the community together. Once all the people are there we will discuss everything together. And then we have many problems, but then we decided, what is the main problem. And if we get the tourist or any kind of business, we will see how we can remove any problems. (C15)

I'm responsible all the time in this project. Earlier, one and a half years I've been local coordinator and chairperson for the co-operative society in my village and region. Much responsibility for the project. (C24)

This is further exemplified in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8 – Participants' Role in Co-operative

Participant	Role in Co-operative
C1	Undecided
C2	Interested in transport
C3	'Whatever is needed'
C4	Homestay and transport
C5	Chairman of CDMO
C6	Undecided
C7-G	Ready to help with variety of needs. Homestay
C8	Local coordinator
C9	Tour Guide
C10	Food preparation Make wool products to sell Talk about plants/ agriculture
C11	Food preparation
C12	First-aid
C13	Undecided Ready to help in any way necessary, e.g. porter work Food preparation
C14	Homestay

	Supply produce to co-op Labour work (e.g. cleaning)
C15	President
C16	Transport
C17	Undecided
C18	Group - various
C19	Secretary Homestay
C20	Undecided *"Doing some job up here, maybe taxi, maybe farming."*
C21	Undecided
C22	Undecided
C23	x
C24	Local coordinator Chairperson
C25	Undecided
C26-G	Undecided
C27	Undecided

Again, a lack of strategic thinking was evident as most did not have a clear vision of how they would contribute. This does not mean that participants were not enthusiastic and willing to help in whichever way possible, but nonetheless, it highlighted the overall lack of direction and defined goals. This is directly connected to the next section, the need for leadership and guidance, as participants

portrayed a "stand-by" attitude. During interviews, and also in informal conversations, the researcher felt a real sense of *waiting* for something to happen, for someone to guide them and to tell them what to do and for someone to send them tourists. What was lacking was an air of initiative or strategic thinking.

4.7.3 'Waiting'

Right now we have not decided a lot of things because we don't have any tourists. […] [We] are excited definitely, but now we are waiting. Like with the other government projects – when the fund is finished, then the project will finish also, so we have this worry. Now we registered the co-operative. We had two or three meetings, but we didn't do anything.

> Researcher: So the other members ((of the co-operative)), are they getting homestays ready? Have they been taking pictures for the portal or not so much?

Some people yes, not everyone. Some people say "if it goes well, then we will also". (C24)

I am waiting for [C19] to tell us about the training and we will then discuss the next steps. (C13)

Right now [I am] not thinking about it too much, but if you will send tourists we will learn what we will have to learn and what we need to do. (C16)

I am worried about the date, the exact date when to start, to help them and other people also.

> Researcher: What if you and the other people in the co-operative, what if you come together and have a meeting and you decide? You think that could work?

Definitely it works. (C3)

Researcher: Would you like to add something that I haven't asked you about?

Only one thing ((laugh)). We need tourists! (C26-G)

4.7.3.1 Need for leadership

Reflecting the sense of 'waiting', there is a clear need for leadership, for someone to tell them what to do.

[I am] ready to attend the program, if anyone asks, [I am] ready. (C4)

Several participants refer to not being in the position to act, perhaps reflecting social hierarchical norms (C1, C6, C9, C15).

[I] don't have very good knowledge of the cDMO. I have knowledge of it, but I'm not in the position to say anything. (C1)

For [C19], or any known person in the village, we will try, they can tell us. (C15)

Researcher: And you know what this project, you know, Queen Margaret University, Yes Bank, Dunira – what do they do specifically for this project?

First of all, I'm not the senior person, my brother is the senior person. So I don't know how it is, but the senior person tell me. So he's telling me and they are giving you the training or other person also, then I'm interested.

[…] Yes, you know, there's first, second, fourth… I am fourth. What he do – I agree for that. He is telling me. (C9)

I think I don't have such a good opinion, but if I give them some good things, then definitely people will like. Chairman, he says we should develop training facility. So I don't have such a good idea, but if I have too, I will pass it to the senior member. (C6)

One of the local leaders confirms this from the perspective of being a leader. He feels like he has to carry the burden of the project.

The people, they love too much to me. My work here, my workload actually, someone share with me I would like. (C8)

4.7.4 Subjective Success (theoretical)

In order to better understand the goals of the individual participants, the researcher wanted to get a sense of what would determine success for the co-operative members. Answers varied, with some looking for additional income or regular business (C22, C24).

[I] will be happy on the day that only one person of the society get some business. Everybody will think – next time is our time. [I] will earn something out of the tourists for this project. So [we] will think, today a single person, then the next time second, third, fourth – the whole community will benefit. I will be happy if [a] single person earn something. (C22)

When the villagers or the co-operative members are satisfied, when the tourists are coming and they come regularly and all the members of the

co-operative get the business, then we will say it's a success. Every month if we will get 10 or 15 people, then everybody get something, then we will say it's success. (C24)

Others mentioned increasing their knowledge through interaction with tourists (C21, C27) and others again just wanted to receive tourists (C6, C18-G),

If we develop CDMO we are the luckiest ones. I will work for that. And in this crucial time we will try to develop things like homestay. And in the next six months I think I should have one guest you know. I will work for that. (C6)

We have to start getting the guests and we want to make the guests happy. When one person is there, maybe 10 guests out there, then it's starting. After a period, maybe three or four times in a month, if this cycle is going on, then we definitely will benefit. Now there is a small plant, it is now growing. The plant which I made last year, now it is giving us the fruit. (C26-G)

some simply to have met foreigners (C9, C18-G).

You are a foreigner, so now [I have] seen a foreigner, already, [I] think [I] have achieved something. (C18-G)

or to 'be known' as an area (C1, C22).

Maybe you would tell someone else about this, maybe we will get business. Maybe we will not get business, but we will be known by other people also, so it's also an achievement. (C22)

These findings show that there is evidence of initiative from members and some activity as a co-operative is taking place, such as informing other villagers, attending meetings or thinking of ways in which to cater to tourists. Some of the participants have specific ideas on job roles, but overall, participants took a very flexible approach to the project. There is a clear lack of direction and very much a sense of waiting for leadership from local coordinators and project managers. In this regard this might highlight a gap in the project approach and a co-operative approach to tourism development overall. The next section will clarify the origin of some of these issues.

4.8 Project Specific

As the project is set within the frame of a specific development project, the interview questions also asked participants about their understanding of what the project was trying to achieve and in which ways support was supposed to be provided. This also offered the researcher an insight into how the project partners were viewed and what expectations were put in them. The IDF project's emphasis was on self-help, hence locals developing their own skills. However, assistance was given in terms of training on the web portal, as well as capacity building, basic training in health and safety and on tourist needs. The members did not receive any direct funds or infrastructure development. Selected participants did however receive training on basic hospitality and on using and managing the web portal, or cDMO, which they were then expected to share with others in the co-operative, hence these workshops ran under the heading "train the trainers". The findings below will look more comprehensively at in which ways the project itself and the help it provides is important when looking at a co-operative approach to rural tourism development, what advantage and opportunity the project creates, and where its shortcomings lie.

4.8.1 Expectations in Project Partners

Naturally, participants have expectations of the project partners. However, in some instances the researcher did not have the impression that participants knew much about the project and the role of the project partners and asked interviewees questions in this regard.

> Researcher: Do you know what the role of the cDMO is? Do you know about the website and what the local managers do?
>
> *No. (C7-G)*

Nonetheless, some participants have very positive views of the project, who believe the project partners are trying to help the community (C4) with training (C24), by providing the internet portal, which lets outsiders know about their village (C26-G).

> *All training was very useful to us. After that we will train our local community members. We will train as we gain. We will try to other person. Training is very fantastic and high level. (C24)*

An advantage appears to be that the project partners are foreigners, which, according to participants C6 and C26-G increases the trust people have in their sincerity.

> *If any project is in India, launched by the government we only ask who was taking the money. But with the foreigners it is different, we believe they won't take anything from here, they want to develop. […] On your part, meaning Queen Margaret University, I am personally satisfied with the work because the portal is there. Maybe now some people know about*

Dhoor, people will know about their particular area. So if this place is known, if tourism starts, we will be very happy. Because people even in Bageshwar and our area they don't know about Dhoor or Kermi. Because they have limited sources of information. (C26-G)

Researcher: And [the different project partners], what do you think they are bringing to the project?

I think they are giving 100%. Because they're coming from abroad, but we people are not supporting them. The important thing is we have to work, they are here to support us. They are coming from abroad and spending their money on us. Unless we work nobody will help us. So everything depending on us, so we should focus a little more. (C6)

4.8.1.1 YES BANK

Views of Indian country partner YES BANK differed. Participant C24 explains his views about the project's country head. He is upset about their inaction and unclear about their role. He also voices that the training sessions should have been held by a native, as expertise in the field exists, and to avoid the communication problems that were apparent throughout training.

There are for me four partners in this project right now, Queen Margaret, Dunira, Senija and YES BANK. There is mismanagement you can see. I think, when people from Scotland are coming here to give us training, they invest a lot of money on that, but you have a country head in India ((YES BANK)). What is his role? He has organized everything in India, where the project is going, what type of training. His role is to develop all of these things here. What should have been done, what you are not doing, the project… The YES BANK or country head has to discuss with Queen Margaret or Dunira "this is the local problems". Then the training should

be held by someone from India, because in India also lots of people have this kind of knowledge and the locals will benefit much more because there's no language barrier. And cost-wise also we can save a lot of money for the project. (C24)

During interviews as well as during informal conversation the confusion about YES BANK's role was obvious and participant C24 openly voices his discontent.

What I tell you, you can tell the others also, I have no problem with that. About the role of YES BANK - what is their role here? When you are here, then YES BANK is activated, they will arrange where we go, where the training will be. Other than that, what is the role? Because they are the country head! If their only role is arranging your travel in India, this can be done by anyone else. A single person also. The other thing […] When we submit a bill they give us our payment. Other than that what is their role? I don't understand what their role is. […] When there are problems he called. Otherwise, he's not calling me. (C24)

From this it can be deduced that either YES BANK is as inactive as participant C24 proclaims or that their role had not been communicated effectively to the members. Participant C8 is similarly critical of YES BANK. While he seems to have positive feelings towards the Scottish partners, he has experienced a variety of problems with the Indian country head.

Yes I had this idea, just a small idea. When this Dunira strategy [came], this kind of help, I pray to God, please, God, give me. But I don't like YES BANK.

Researcher: Why not?

The people, they are so corporate, I don't like that. That is only my opinion. […] These people are Indian. Lots of responsibility. […] You are Indian, you do this project in India. Scottish people, London people are interested for us, so why, so why you not? (C8)

He further believes that they lack strategy and don't communicate or discuss their actions enough.

You can say to [Senior President and Country Head of YES BANK] and the others some words. This is a project, you have schedule, first month do this, next month you do this – he don't know. (C8)

Researcher: So you don't think YES BANK has a good plan?

No. When Scottish push the guys, then he pushed me. Why man? You have the plan, take a routine, this month is this, this month is that.

In addition he was worried about potential problems when YES BANK put a large amount of money to pay for project related expenses into his personal bank account.

For example, he took a budget for this workshop – 2 Lakh[24]. They put the 2 Lakh in my account. You don't send me a letter or anything. After that income-people maybe question to me: "INR 2 Lakh?".

Researcher: So they put the money in your account for the workshop, but didn't send you anything to explain it.

This problem. You sent to me, please send me a mail: "For the workshop you need INR 2 Lakhs". Last night my friend called me saying, "you have lots of money in your account, when the government ask what is your

[24] Approximately £2000

answer?". Rather, money send to co-operative vendor. This is money of the activity of the co-operative. I don't hate these people, but they are not much serious about this. (C8)

Similarly, when being sent his contract to work as local coordinator for West Bengal, things were not as he had wished.

When they send me the mutual understanding paper, then I read the paper. When YES BANK sent the paper, it says, this is three-year project. But when he contacted me, […] I say [to] YES BANK people, I don't sign, because only eight months remaining. And if you find it then you say to me "[C8] is three years employed in this particular". I am not man! This is your problem. Scottish government is spending money for this project and spend lots of time. Why you do this? I can't. And you say, this is one problem. (C8)

4.8.2 Keeping up efforts Lack of progress

Thus, not all expectations in the project partners have been fulfilled yet and, echoing the *sense of waiting* as previously addressed in point 4.7.3 – 'Waiting', impatience is evident in some participants (C17, C24, C26-G), who expect the project managers to 'send' tourists. It also touches upon another point, the lack of strategy. People are eager to take action and for something to happen. The lack of progress, however, which participants perceive to be the responsibility of project managers, means that people find it difficult to keep up their efforts (C6, C16, C17, C19, C24, C26-G, C27.

So yes this is true, the community is worried about that ((the lack of progress)). Last year we had a training, this year we had a training, in the meantime nothing happened. So we have to go tell the people now what we learned in West Bengal: the project is delayed. (C24)

Participant C17 says if nothing happens within a year, people will think the IDF project is just like a government project.

> *The community supports it totally and everybody has something to spare in the community. But there is problem also. Right now we don't have any problems, because the project just started. But in the future, after a certain time, people will say you are only talking, you are doing nothing. At the end of the day nothing will happen. Maybe after a certain time there is a problem, but at the moment there is no problem, because everybody's very hopeful, they think the customers would come, they are very hopeful. But after certain time, if nothing goes well, people will complain. […] If we will not do anything until one year, then it will just be like a government project. (C17)*

To participant C26-G processes are not frequent enough.

> *Everyone knows what is the process. We can't do in one week or a one month or one year. In the last year we had some trainings in Dhoor and through the co-operative at least they started this potato thing also. They know the process is going, but it should not stop, every few months something should happen. (C26-G)*

Similarly, participant C6 thinks progress is too slow.

> *They should be more effective, because we are very slow, that is my personal feeling. We have passed one year complete. But we are not in a position you know, because, one and a half years we passed, already passed that. We should be more than 60 or 70 %, but I think we are 30 or 40 %. So we should work hard, all our members, so that we can achieve*

> *things that little faster. Our management, our local coordinators, our members, give a little more time, we can do better and faster. (C6)*

And participant C17 fears that people will complain if their hopes in the project are not fulfilled,

> *But there is problem also. Right now we don't have any problems because the project just started. But in the future, after a certain time people will say "you are only talking, you are doing nothing". At the end of the day nothing will happen. Maybe after a certain time there is a problem, but at the moment there is no problem because everybody's very hopeful, they think the customers would come, they are very hope will. But after certain time, if nothing goes well, people will complain. […] We have now the society, we have rooms, we have portal, we are doing training. After certain time, I am ready to serve some people. Yes, [Project Manager], when do you think you will be able to get some tourists? When will we start to get business? (C17)*

which may be confirmed by what participant C16 says.

> *Everything needs time, so [we] just establish the society four, five months ago. [C19] told me we would get guests. We will see, three or four months, then if still nothing happened we don't have to wait for that either. (C16)*

4.8.2.1 Lack of tourists

Participants C2, C24 and C27 emphasise how important it is for people to feel like something is happening and for tourists to start coming.

For next few months there should be guests here to sustain the members of the co-operative, like ULIPH are giving visitors now. We need five or ten people, then we can learn about problems, what we have to do. Just to see we can get business. […] Here's two questions. Now we have this interview, we have training also, but what is your next step? And the other question is, when the local people to come and look at the homestays? You can see what the problems are and tell us and we can change it accordingly. (C27)

Participant C24 believes that if tourists remain absent for much longer, the whole project could be at jeopardy. If tourist numbers are insufficient, he nonetheless sees opportunities to continue working together collectively by selling produce.

If this project will end March [2013], then the members will try, but we will try if the guests are there. If the guests are not there, then we will not. After some time maybe we leave also the society if the guests are not there. If the guests are not there: We can try to improve our homestay, our cleanliness, our area, but how to get the guests? If the guests are not there maybe it will be a problem for the co-operative. Second thing, if the tourists are there, just a few, then what they ((the members)) can do? Then we try some other things also, try to sell our products collectively also. Within the same society. We are only waiting for the tourists. First we establish this well, then other things for earning more. (C24)

He also worries that this project is just like other government projects, which stop once the funding runs out.

[We] are excited definitely, but now we are waiting. Like with the other government projects, when the fund is finished, then the project will finish

also. So we have this worry also. Now we registered the co-operative, we had two or three meetings, but we didn't do anything. (C24)

Participant C19, however, is adamant that they have to try and continue, irrespective of the input from the IDF project.

If we started with your help, let's suppose you are not here tomorrow, we have to make it continue. And if we make, if we continue in one or two years we will not make much money, but maybe we have a little customers, maybe three or four. But then when people know about it, maybe when people know about the project maybe then definitely we will get customers as well. (C19)

4.8.2.2 Need for ongoing support

While self-help is at the heart of the co-operative principles, the need for on-going external support and training is repeatedly brought up (C17, C19, C24). Participant C24 acknowledges that the members are not putting in enough efforts in regard to populating the web portal with information, but that this is due to the lack of ability to do so.

Until this time what they supported for the training was good, but not enough. […] We know how to put the photograph in the text, but it is all our problem also, that we can't ((do it)) properly. But whatever we can write we write. Then somebody has to tell us 'this is the problem'. It can't be changed in one month, we need support on that, maybe six months, maybe one year, we need support. The other part, if you're talking about the training, we have only one type of training - the portal training. The other things we only discuss the project - there is no training. […] But we are also not able to write in English or send a text, the local coordinators. So we are not able to write and translate these things in a timely manner.

[…] The delays are not only from Scottish government or YES BANK side, but also from our side. We are not giving enough to market it properly. (C24)

Without ongoing support the efforts already put in the project may have been futile.

The other is, if the project cannot continue with financial help, but they can send the tourists, we can improve our lifestyle that way. Otherwise, they have been a lot, they have made the portal, they have made lots of expenses training, but at the end of this, if they will not help, even without finance, they need other support. We already doing a little bit here, we will try that also, but without ongoing support it will not be success. (C17)

Also, regular visits from the Scottish project partners would be welcome.

From Queen Margaret University, Dunira – time to time, you visit our project, our site.

Researcher: We should do that?

Every three months [laughs]. (C24)

Participants C26-G are waiting to find out how the project intends to continue their support.

If we will not get support, right now we're making more members […]. First of all, we will have a meeting and discuss about the project. What will happen after 31st of March? We were talking about the training sessions in Purulia for the portal. But if they ((the project partners)) don't

support us financially, they have to support as someway. If the query is coming from the guest, so someone needs to be capable to reply the question. So my basic point is they have to support some ways. How they will do – we are waiting for that. (C26-G)

Work on the portal appears to be a real problem. Even after training, participant C17 does not feel confident about writing in English.

You can know everything about his village, but I can't translate. But I need this kind of assistance. I received training on the photographs, creating thumbnails, so that was good. The problem is on the text part. […] The major problem is the text paragraphs. Out of 500 people not a single person who can write good, nobody. We accept this. If anybody saw the portal, and see the photographs, they want to read about it. The tourist will not try again and again. Maybe they ((the tourists)) don't have that kind of time, then the impression is not good. (C17)

4.8.2.3 Marketing/ Portal

In addition to the practical side of working with the web portal, the researcher observed a general lack of understanding of the project, for example in regard to what the different partners contribute. Marketing channels in particular were not well understood.

We, every place has something unique, every place has something. […] But nobody comes here because we don't have any kind of marketing or any kind of things to let them know about the village. (C22)

This becomes more clear when participants talk about ideas how to get tourists, for example just from word of mouth or telling travellers at train stations.

To find tourists somebody should go to the bus station or train station and tell them about the village.

((The researcher probes about the portal))

I don't know anything about. (C13)

Tourists normally come stay in the hotels in cities. So I am thinking, in our village tourists are not there, so we have to try to get to know ((tell) the tourists that we have something there, how we live, so they can enjoy that also maybe. (C15)

If there are one or two people from India or outsiders […] then they can also tell other people. I want that kind of marketing. […] I can do marketing, I am doing road construction, I can do work anywhere in Uttarakhand. I know about the website. Whenever I go anywhere, I can show my colleagues and engineer: This is my area where I belong, have a look. They look at the photographs, if the pictures are good looking, attractive, they may think once we will go there. If they will come they will touch other people. So this is also a source of marketing. (C22)

While these participants are aware of the website, they think other channels of marketing may have to be explored, such as in print media,

The portal and marketing. Some people look at the Edge of India ((website name)), but some people look at magazines, newspapers. Maybe the Indian tourists will not see the portal, right? Maybe in radio or TV also, then people know about us. If two or three people come to this place then they might tell other people. So right now that's maybe better than the portal. (C17)

brochures,

> *Now that the portal is there, we think we can go to the best tourists places with a pamphlet about us, about our homestays. So then we can show the tourists who were staying in other cases, we can show the other things. "We would be grateful if you could stay with us for one night". We could do these kind of activities for these kind of promotional things. (C19)*

or road signs (C9, C24).

> *So in the road, we put there some board. Everybody passed the road, so we put there some boards – here is the ecotourism.*
>
> Researcher: So people who come past here anyway? So you can only find people who come past…. What about people in Delhi, how can they find out about you?
>
> *They will have contact number. Like suppose from Haldwani, it's the last station by train. So I take him from there. (C9)*

4.8.3 Trust Issues

The ethical implications of starting a project of this sort become apparent when participants talk about mistrust from other villagers who are not part of the co-operative and who are unsure about the project managers' intentions (C1, C8, C19).

> *Currently people are talking: 'You are doing this kind of thing, the Scottish government is helping you'. Other people in the market are saying: 'How much money are you getting, why did they choose this area?' – this kind of things. So we try to tell them and maybe they will understand. (C19)*

4.9 Recapitulation

From the above findings a number of shortcomings became clear: More intensive and ongoing training needs to be provided. Lack of language skills presents a real challenge. Furthermore, it appears that the project partners over-estimated the locals' ability to work with the web portal and build a thorough enough understanding of basic hospitality skills such as hygiene and cleanliness.

Some conclusions can be drawn from the extent of help that was given and what this infers about the replication of such a project. It raises some questions: Could these communities realistically raise themselves out of poverty through tourism co-operatives without external help? Which kind of support is seen as essential by locals and where may there be shortcomings within the help provided by the project? Do people put trust in the various partners? Do the members rely on the project partners too much and can the expectations be met?

In the following section, the findings will be discussed in a more condensed manner, comparing it to and enriching it with literature, in effect, to answer Objective 5 – *To outline the overall strengths and weaknesses of a co-operative tourism approach in the context of the IDF project, and consider its suitability for a framework towards sustainable development in rural India.* All five objectives will be addressed in the following section and through this the aim of the research will be achieved.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Chapter 5: Discussion

5 Introduction

This research set out to investigate what can be learned about a co-operative approach to sustainable rural tourism development in India. A review of the relevant literature revealed a clear gap in knowledge on co-operatives in a tourism context. A clear set of research aims and objectives were identified, from which the methodology, methods and research design were developed and executed. The findings from primary research were presented in the preceding chapter and while this predominantly focused on the presentation of broader themes by looking at the specific views and experience of the research participants, this chapter now moves back from the specific to the broad, and hence towards theory creation. The intention is to distil what was learned from the findings, to critically analyse these and discuss what conclusions can be drawn from them.

Furthermore, this discussion will be contextualised by making the research setting and framework explicit. This means that a picture of the current life situation of the participants will be painted, and it will be discussed how tourism and co-operatives fit into this particular setting, with reference to the particular contribution the IDF project makes. This is aimed at increasing the transferability of this study and to enable other researchers in the assessment of whether or not the findings could hold true in a research setting or context of a similar nature, as discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). It should be noted, that unless otherwise mentioned, where the researcher talks of ‘the villages’, this is in direct reference to the areas under investigation.

All objectives will be revisited and addressed in this chapter to give the discussion the necessary focus and clarity of argument. Here, the discussion of the relevant literature and primary data will be brought together and draw attention to relationships or discrepancies. This will highlight what contribution the research

presented in this thesis has made to the understanding of the research topic and to knowledge in general. Most importantly, the overall aim of this research study will be fulfilled:

> *To explore the nature of co-operative tourism and its potential towards sustainable rural tourism development in India from a stakeholder perspective.*

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the study for theory and practice within the tourism industry, the debate on sustainable development and co-operative business, and makes relevant recommendations for the future.

5.1 Objective 1 – Strengths and Challenges of Village Life in Rural India

> *To develop an understanding of the current life situation of selected rural communities, the specific nature of strengths and challenges within these and the implications that can be drawn from this.*

Conducting field work within rural communities of Uttarakhand and West Bengal painted a rich picture of the current life situation in each respective area, which was important in order to establish the difficulties and strengths in the communities so as to fully understand whether or not tourism – and specifically tourism co-operatives – have a place in these particular settings.

There are clear reasons why the villagers of this research want to stay where they are. Participants of both areas take great pride in where they live and feel blessed with their strong cultural identity, expressed in local festival, dances, or simply a strong sense of community, in which people rely on each other's support.

Furthermore, their natural environment, such as beautiful landscapes, peace and quiet, as well as good air quality are aspects that are valued highly and put into contrast with city life, which is perceived as congested and dirty. Another reason is, of course, that people feel rooted in their villages, yet many find it necessary to leave for reasons further discussed below.

The villages under investigation are all farming communities. Agriculture is deeply engrained in the local psyche and most of the participants live from subsistence farming. Some also run additional small enterprises, such as taxi services, small shops or selling surplus produce in nearby villages. However, overall employment opportunities are insufficient, which has significant socio-economic implications for the communities. These opportunities are reduced for a number of factors, such as the remoteness of the villages and consequent lack of markets and general infrastructure. Furthermore, the agricultural sector is decreasing for India as a whole (FAO 2006; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010) and this is also the case in these specific villages, where it does not provide enough work or income to sustain the rural communities. This is, for example, due to decreasing land holdings, because of inheritance of property being split between offspring and consequently becoming smaller for each family from generation to generation, but also because it is sold off for quick profit without consideration for the long-term consequences. In addition, according to some, the quality of soil and crop yields are decreasing. While it is not clear why this is so, some hint at climate change playing a factor in this.

In this regard, the villages fit into the definition adopted for this thesis of a remote or peripheral rural areas, which is far away from urban areas and may also have low quality land (OECD 1993), with a poor infrastructure, open spaces, predominantly agricultural activities and a strong sense of community (Lane 1994; Ashley and Maxwell 2001 and Robinson 1990). Likewise, the situation in the villages reflects much of what is discussed in the literature on the challenges faced by many rural communities in developing countries. The threat of climate

change, as mentioned for instance by Swarbooke (1999), Murphy and Price (2005), UNEP and WTO (2005), Jayawardena et al. (2008) or Verbeek and Mommaas (2008) is seen as a global threat. However, whereas this is mainly discussed in the context of public awareness and the growing importance of sustainable tourism approaches, in the case of the rural villages under discussion, it already has a direct impact on their livelihoods and further contributes to the most pressing issue faced by these communities – migration away from the villages and to the cities. This vast migration of people, mainly young men, has the most detrimental socio-cultural effects and is recognised as a major problem by authors such as Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan (2010) or Woolcock and Narayan (2000) and also confirmed by the participants who clearly see this as a threat to the social fabric of their communities.

Increasing agricultural activities is largely expressed as one of the key success factors for rural development (IFAD 2010; Hall, Roberts and Mitchell 2012). However, derived from the interviews it becomes clear that increasing agricultural activities alone will by no means solve all the problems stated above. The poor quality of education for people's children, for instance, emerged as a major problem to those interviewed. While the Indian government is improving basic services for the poor through universal access to elementary education (World Bank 2012), the quality of this is not perceived to be high by the villagers. This presents an additional push factor for people to migrate to larger hubs or send their children away to live with relatives in areas with better access to education, which is highly disruptive to family life.

Adding to the complexity of the problem is the lack of opportunities for those who are educated to find employment in line with their expectations as graduates. Whereas parents would like their children to return to their native villages, these offer little incentive to the educated young, who according to some village elders are unwilling to carry out hard labour or *"blue collar jobs"* (E3). Consequently, lack of education drives people to migrate or to send their children away, while at

the same time, a better education may keep them from finding suitable jobs in their villages. In this regard, one of the key factors to improve rural livelihoods – the importance of increasing agricultural activities (IFAD 2010; Hall, Roberts and Mitchell 2012) – may not present the ultimate panacea after all. Instead, the need of diversifying rural economies, as suggested by Holland, Burian, and Dixey (2003) and IFAD (2010) needs to be investigated more thoroughly. Then again, creating better employment opportunities alone may still not address the overall infrastructure or quality of education available in the villages. Nevertheless, an overall improvement of the socio-economic situation in the areas may have a positive impact or ripple-effect on all aspects of society, such as an improved general infrastructure of a destination (Shah and Gupta 2000) and spin-off enterprise development (Holland, Burian and Dixey 2003) and hence, create more opportunities for people to invest in areas of life most important to them. However, these are speculations and digress from the original focus of this discussion.

Again, creating alternative employment opportunities is not an easily addressed challenge, which is hindered by a generally poor infrastructure and lack of markets in which to operate, hence limiting the options people can create for themselves. In this regard, there is a clear consensus among all participant groups of this study, as well as within the literature on poor rural communities in general (AusAid 2000; Roesner 2000; Shah and Gupta 2000; Blackman et al. 2004; Hall, Kirkpatrick, and Mitchell 2005; Kayat 2008; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010; IFAD 2010; Hall, Roberts, and Mitchell 2012). In the villages, some opportunities were established, such as joining the army or running small businesses; however, to date, none of these appear to present a real solution to the overarching problem. This distinct lack of choice in regard to employment can be seen as another manifestation of poverty, as also emphasized by Smith and Ross (2006).

Then again, the sense of community and existing mutual support structures, which are repeatedly mentioned by the participants, can be seen as a real strength of the

villages. These kind of support structures are important in order to enable people to get by in times of difficulty, as discussed by Holzmann and Jorgensen (1999). They also show that there may be potential for people to get organised and better their situation through mutual support. At the same time, this may not be enough to sustainably improve a community's situation, as previously discussed in the Social Capital and Transitions Model by Woolcock and Narayan (2000). This underlines that issues of poverty must be addressed at a variety of levels and encompass a development approach which can address the problems in the villages. These are:

- A lack of general infrastructure (e.g. road access, education)
- A lack of employment opportunities
- A lack of markets in which to operate
- Creating employment which is attractive to the educated young
- Creating ways in which these groups of people can be empowered and enabled to change their situation in an organised and sustainable manner

Table 5.1 below provides a further recap of the different themes discussed above in form of a SWOT analysis.

Table 5.1 – SWOT Analysis of Village Life

Strengths • Natural Beauty/ Environment • Mutual support amongst villagers • Strong cultural identity	S	W	*Weaknesses* • Lack of employment opportunities • Remoteness • Lack of road access • Lack of access to: good quality education; hospitals; markets
Opportunities • Employment in army • Small businesses (food stalls, processing local produce, taxis)	O	T	*Threats* • Unemployment • Migration • Alcoholism • Social imbalance

Perusing the above table, it can be argued that unemployment is the most pressing issue for the villages, as the effects of the resulting migration have the most detrimental impact on various aspects of life. As opportunities for employment creation are limited, it is proposed that tourism may present a viable opportunity in this regard, as also discussed by Telfer and Sharpley (2008), for areas with lack of practical alternatives. This is because it is comparatively easy to set up and requires little initial investment. This will be elaborated on in the next section, which aims to establish the feasibility of a tourism approach to development in this particular context.

5.2 Objective 2 – Tourism as a Development Tool for Rural Communities

To ascertain if tourism can be seen as a viable development tool to address the challenges of these rural communities

When discussing employment prospects with the participants, it clearly emerged that opportunities are limited. As the participants were aware of the IDF project, conversations quickly diverged in the tourism domain.

Tourism is seen as a viable employment opportunity by all participant groups, who generally portrayed very positive attitudes about the prospects of tourism development in the area. Unsurprisingly, creating employment and its associated economic benefits are believed to have a positive impact on society. For instance, it would present a chance to stay in the village and in this, help to stop migration. Furthermore, participants associate other positive aspects with tourism, such as being low in initial investment and being able to make use of existing resources.

These are not unrealistic expectations, as tourism has become a catalyst for rural development for many developing and developed economies (Briedenhann and Wickens 2004; Ibrahim and Girgis 2008; Koutra 2010) to counteract the agricultural decline through diversification (Lane 1994; Holland, Burian and Dixey 2003; Byrd 2007). When looking at some of the potentially positive effects of tourism, for example being a low-cost investment, as the natural setting and resources are its main attraction (Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010), an improved general infrastructure of a destination (Shah and Gupta 2000) and spin-off enterprise development (Holland, Burian and Dixey 2003), it becomes clear that there is potential to address some of the most pressing issues these communities face. Spin-off enterprise development is also an anticipated benefit from the participants' perspective, who believe that other businesses in the community would benefit, specifically transport, small shops or restaurants (food

stalls), as well as increasing agricultural activities, for example by processing local produce.

Subsequently, the perceived benefits of tourism, both in literature and by the participants, are great and there are some indications that there is real potential for tourism development in both states as expressed in the simple criteria set by Taware (2008) for developing agritourism. These criteria state that tourists need: Something to see; something to do; something to buy. These points could easily be achieved in the areas under investigation. Both areas, particularly Uttarakhand with views of the Himalayan mountain range, are rich in natural beauty. Furthermore, tourists could engage in cultural activities, such as festivals or observing and participating in traditional ways of life, as well as visiting the many temples. While at the time of the researcher's field visits, there was little evidence of 'souvenirs' to buy, participants saw potential in processing and selling local produce or selling wool products.

On the other hand, this may be an overly-simplified way of looking at it, especially when taking into account the obstacles to tourism developments in rural India, mentioned by Mott MacDonald (2007) or Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan (2010) as lack of basic infrastructure, such as lack of accommodation; lack of guides; and lack of sanitation, as well as hygiene. The latter point poses a real problem in all of the villages in West Bengal, which have no sanitation at all. Briefly considering Maslow's discussion on a hirarchy of needs for human motivation (1943), which is regularly applied to a tourism context, a lack of sanitation would mean that one of the most basic physiological and biological needs, as well as safety needs may not be met (Maslow 1943). This raises questions on how motivated tourists would be to visit in the first place. However, some of the participants in West Bengal were very aware of this problem and had started making plans for installing sanitation in the near future from their own investments and through government support, who, according to the participants, triple private investments in sanitation. There were additional ways participants

were thinking of catering to tourist needs and what kind of services could be developed, for example providing guided tours and offering different foods, as well as offering a basic level of cleanliness. While these aspects were not put in place at the time of data collection, awareness of these issues should be seen as a positive sign.

Nevertheless, a barrier which remains is the lack of skills and experience among the participants. Blackman et al. (2004) and Wilson et al. (2012) discuss this as a factor which can stop communities from actively taking part in development in peripheral areas. This became evident in several areas in regard to the IDF project, predominantly expressed as lack of language skills, but also concerning development and upkeep of the web portal and ongoing support in general. Participants expressed that more training on tourists' needs was required, especially on international tourists in regard to cultural differences, language and food preferences. This aspect will be further discussed below when talking about the IDF project.

According to the discussion above, tourism has clear potential, despite some of the challenges that emerged. However, when taking into account the many potentially negative impacts tourism could create for the local community as so much discussed in the relevant literature, for example sexual exploitation (Shah and Gupta 2000), over-dependency on tourism income (Pforr 2001), staged authenticity and cultural distortion (Richards and Hall 2002), environmental degradation and economic leakages (inter alia Youell 1998; Swarbooke 1999; Richards and Hall 2002; Mbaiwa 2005; Murphy and Price 2005; UNEP and WTO 2005; Jayawardena et al. 2008; Verbeek and Mommaas 2008), perhaps it should be considered whether or not tourism should be promoted in this kind of context at all.

The interviews suggest that the villagers could indeed be vulnerable to negative influences, as the understanding of tourism and its various impacts was very low.

Whereas some academics made comments in regard to the lack of waste management posing a problem, a very low understanding of this and the impacts of tourism in general were identified among the local community. Even when prompted, it was difficult to some to anticipate serious problems, as exemplified below:

> Researcher: And what if a lot of people come for trekking – they could destroy the environment maybe?
>
> *No! They will not. They are educated, they are wealthy, they will not destroy our environment. (L10-G)*

Therefore, there is some evidence that the communities under investigation may be at risk of experiencing negative impacts, due to an overall low awareness and expecting the tourists to be 'good'. This lack of awareness could potentially have serious implications for the host communities as it can make them more prone to such impacts occurring and more vulnerable to exploitation, which is highlighted by Swarbooke (1999), Archer, Cooper, and Ruhanen (2005), Shah and Gupta (2000), for example. This has to be recognised as a serious challenge and will be further discussed below, by looking at how being part of a co-operative may minimise some of these threats.

Then again, some anticipated problems did emerge from the interviews in regard to tourist behaviour, who may drink or smoke in public, or have a different attitude to public displays of affection or type of clothing, the last point predominantly in regard to women. To some, this is seen as a potentially negative infiltration of the local culture. Others, however, see cultural changes as a natural development, which could be postitive when looked at as a sign of progress. Another aspect mentioned was that the reputation of the whole village could be at risk if problems with tourist behaviour repeatedly occurred. The villages had not received any tourists at the time of data collection and therefore little assessment

of the actual negative or positive impacts can be made at this point. Nonetheless, it was evident that the project partners' presence had already created some discontent and anxiety among some members of the wider community in the villages in West Bengal. Some were questioning who would profit from the project, while others were scared of their culture being 'trapped'. The members of the co-operative thought that the only way to tackle such issues was through awareness programs and by spreading the benefits of tourism among the community, for example through job creation. This emphasises the need for extensive communication with the immediate stakeholders of such a project, as well as with others in the community who may be indirectly affected by it. Again, a development approach, which aims to create the widest benefit for the largest number of people should be promoted here.

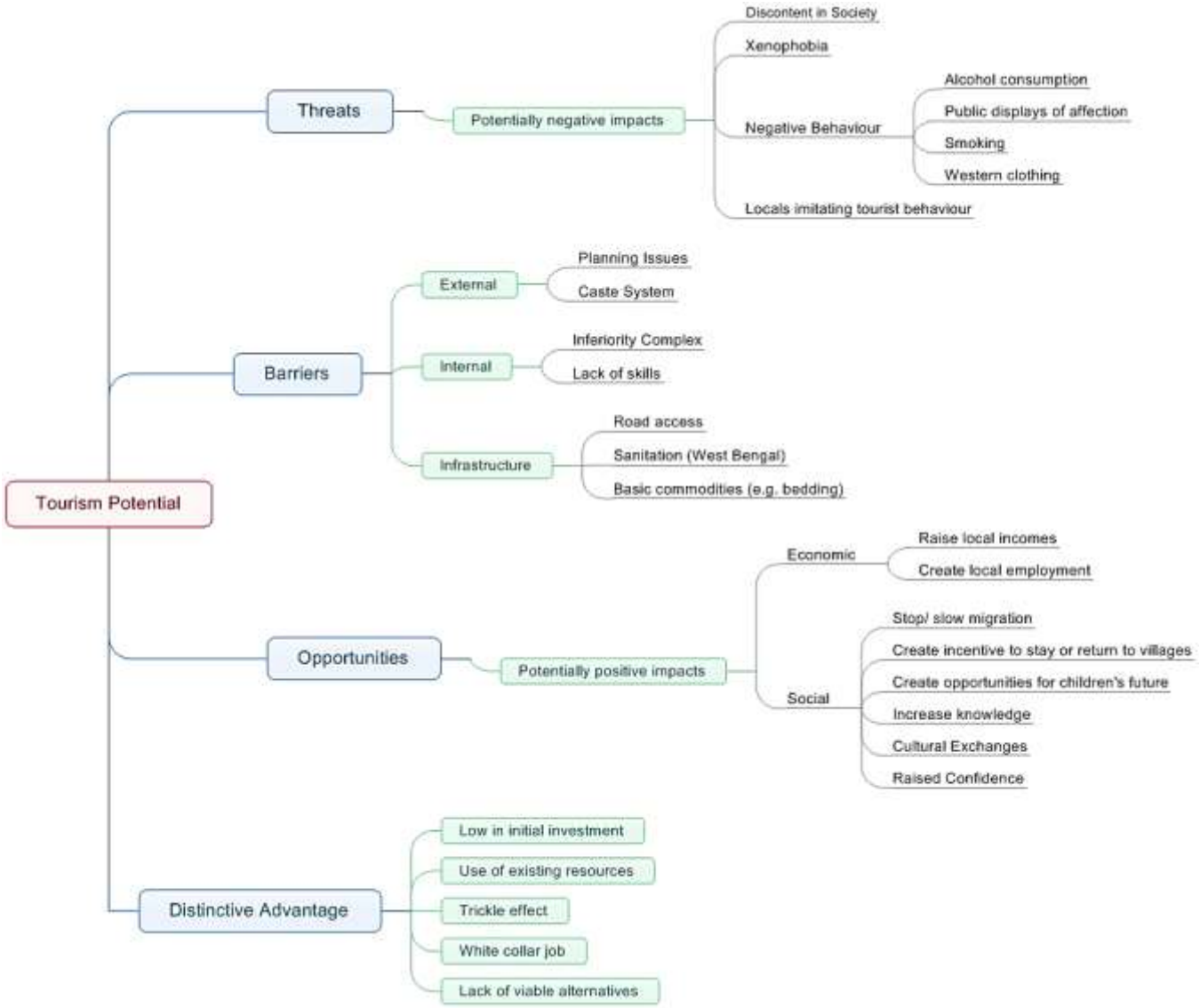
The above challenges mainly pertain to infrastructural challenges or to participants' skills and confidence. Two further challenges, conversely, relate to the external environemnt in which tourism development would take place. These points were only brought up by the 'expert' participant group, who criticise the government for the lack of planning for tourism development, besides its real potential. This means that any tourism activity that did take place would do so without many support structures in place.

In addition, one participant questions whether or not members of the lowest, unscheduled caste could be included in development programs, since they cannot eat with the rest of the community, are not allowed to prepare food for higher caste members and are generally outsiders to community activities. He further queries whether visitors would be able to accept these cultural differences without being judgemental. Taking a community-centric approach, it is clear that any changes to the normal social structures need to come from within the community rather than being imposed on them by outsiders. Then again, it is emphasised that all stakeholders should be permitted and encouraged to participate in decision-making processes (Timothy 1998; Mbaiwa 2005; Byrd 2007), as is the inclusions

of marginalised groups of people (Chakrabarty and Gosh 2009). In order to achieve this, measures would have to be in place to facilitate such change and enable those often excluded from development to become active participants, again hinting at a co-operative business structure. However, this will be discussed later.

With reference to Objective 2, which aimed to establish if tourism can be seen as a viable development tool to address the challenges of these rural communities, it can be said that there is definite promise in both areas under investigation. Tourism has potential to improve the economic situation in the villages, but also to bring significant social benefits, such as to slow down migration, create opportunities for the future of the villagers' children, increase people's knowledge through cultural exchanges and raise people's confidence. There are further distinctive advantages to engaging in tourism, as it is low in initial investment, attractive to the educated youth, who are looking for white-collar jobs, and also due to the trickle effect tourism would have on a variety of businesses in the area. However, tourism may also cause socio-cultural difficulties when tourists do not adapt to locally acceptable norms of behaviour, or through cultural infiltration. For this reason and further challenges, principally infrastructural challenges, planning issues, a distinct lack of language skills and confidence, as well as the potentially negative impacts already discussed above, tourism can by no means be considered a panacea. Figure 5.1 summarises the various challenges and opportunities.

Figure 5.1 – Tourism Potential



Despite the real threats the above mentioned negative impacts could pose, the problem of lack of employment opportunities remains, presenting a serious threat to the livelihoods of the villagers in its own right. Faced with the reality of there being no viable alternatives to tourism, as previously expressed by Telfer and Sharpley (2008) and confirmed by some of the participants, focus should instead be put on looking at ways in which these negative impacts can be minimised. This was already emphasised in the discussion on community-centric approaches in Chapter 2. Here it was claimed that community involvement in tourism can reduce the negative and improve the positive impacts tourism can create, through a more equal distribution of resources and shared knowledge (for example discussed by Okazaki 2008). This, again, can result in an over-simplified discussion on what Taylor (1995) calls a romanticised concept, which is based on unrealistic expectations, starting with the challenge of how to define a community in the first place (Richards and Hall 2002). The structural constraints communities can face should not be under-estimated, and this is intensified when the community is rural and poor, as is discussed by Blackstock (2005) and Telfer (2000) and which holds true for the villages under investigation. This consequently has an impact on how truly empowered it can feel (Blackstock 2005). Okazaki (2008) adds, that few studies offer practical ways in which such community participation could be promoted. In consideration of this, the discussion now turns to co-operatives to understand what motivates people to join them in the first place, to examine in which ways they may be able to alleviate some of these problems, to point out any distinctive advantage they generate, while also calling attention to gaps in their practical implementation.

5.3 Objective 3 – The Distinctive Attributes of a Co-operative Tourism Approach

> *To identify perceptions of and motivations towards forming tourism co-operatives and to outline the distinctive attributes associated with adopting a co-operative approach to tourism.*

The need for an approach to tourism development, which can minimise the challenges discussed above, has now been established. This section looks at a co-operative approach in this regard. Firstly, motivations of locals to join the co-operatives will be discussed. Taking into account that, in theory, any individual could venture into tourism, what motivated locals to work as a co-operative, a group of people, instead? By discussing these motivational aspects, some of the distinctive attributes associated with a co-operative approach become clearer. At the same time, it becomes evident that the co-operative structure itself may not be the main motivator to some.

It is perhaps of little surprise that a clear perceived economic benefit is one of the main incentives for the villagers to join the co-operatives. This presents a unique opportunity to better the villagers' situation while posing few risks, which is much in line with the views of Birchall and Ketilson (2009) and Majee and Hoyt (2011), who talk about a perceived financial benefit to participants, rather than a philosophical motivation being key to motivating people. To the villagers, this motivation not only relates to personal gain, but also to the benefit for the wider community through employment creation and, consequently, additional income. Being able to build a better future for their children can also be seen as part of this. Similarly, improving the community in a more general sense is mentioned as a motivator, for example by being exposed to different cultures and the learning opportunities this presents, or simply to meet foreigners.

This suggests an implicit positive attitude towards working for mutual benefit – arguably an advantage when venturing into co-operative activities. According to Mellor, Stirling and Hannah (1988), the co-operatives under investigation could therefore be classified as 'participative' co-operatives rather than 'ideological' co-operatives, which may hence be less motivated by a co-operative ideology than the prospects of job creation, or to secure easier access to support agencies. However, Barke and Eden (2001) argue that a certain degree of ideological

commitment is essential to work within a capitalist economy, which could otherwise turn individuals into small capitalists who may want to withdraw their investment or become reluctant to reinvest profits into the business.

While it cannot be argued that this ideological commitment played an explicit role in people's motivations, it would be unreasonable to claim that it is not present whatsoever. The villagers clearly portray collective rather than individualist positions, a fundamental distinction made by Barke and Eden (2001), again underlining that co-operative activities are suited to work within the natural support structures present in these rural villages.

There were other reasons for joining, such as being low-in risk, even taking into account the initial membership payment of INR 100[25] each member has to pay. Risks being shared is seen as an important component of co-operative activities and their advantage in poverty alleviation in the relevant literature (for example Polat 2005; Wanyama, Develtere and Pollet 2008; IFAD 2010; Kalmi 2013). By combining finances and other resources, individuals reduce their personal risk by sharing it with others. This point of risks being shared was not explicitly made by the participants in regard to their motivation to join; however, implicitly emerged as a theme when discussing what advantage they perceived being part of a co-operative had. This will be picked up on again below. Furthermore, the need for relatively low initial investment allows people to help themselves and carry on with their activities once external support withdraws, also mentioned by ILO (2001) and Birchall (2003).

A further motivator reveals a more opportunistic element. Many joined simply because others were joining. This shows that rather than making an objectively informed and independent decision, the members acted on trust in or respect for individual leaders within their community. This does not necessarily have to be

[25] INR100 = approximately £1 (November 2014)

seen as a negative, as long as the participants understand their role in the co-operative and take ownership of their actions eventually. However, as will become more clear in the discussion of Objective 4, this was not always the case.

The above points portray some of the main motivators for people to join the co-operatives, yet do not explicitly point to the unique co-operative business structure as being a major factor in the motivation to take part in the project. The following points, however, hint at ways in which the co-operative structure is seen to be of distinctive benefit in this kind of context.

One participant believes, for instance, that being part of the co-operative will strengthen the natural structure of people working together. Another one feels that working as a co-operative will improve communication among villagers. She believes her voice will be better heard in her government role of educating villagers about safe childbirth.

Furthermore, people value that benefits would be shared, directly from tourism income generated by the co-operative, but also in regard to wider society, to whom a market for selling crafts or produce could open up. Moreover, to many, being able to tap into each other's knowledge and skills were motivators, as well as increasing the sense of togetherness. These are attributes that can be directly linked to the co-operative structure, which are also mentioned in the relevant literature (Birchall and Simmons 2008; Birchall and Ketilson 2009; Majee and Hoyt 2011) as some of the distinctive advantages of co-operatives, as they create loyalty, commitment and shared knowledge among its members. Co-operatives teach people to work together and to learn how to trust each other. This strengthens community identity as well as confidence in the individual (Majee and Hoyt 2011) and reflects the findings from this research. This is an important finding, as the health of the community in which people live is of major importance to their livelihoods, and it is essential for people to be able to rely on each other's support. Revisiting an excerpt from the interview with one participant

portrays well how co-operatives can strengthen these natural bonds present within these rural communities.

> *[…] in a co-operative, we are like family members. In the village we are also like family members, [but] they [can] have different views. If [someone is] a member of the society, she works with us. If she did it independently, she has her views only, as a co-operative we can talk with each other. (C15)*

Mutual support is also highlighted by several participants in a general sense and more specifically in regard to any potential problems which could arise from tourists visiting, which could be more easily addressed with the support of the group. Likewise, mutual monitoring is seen as a benefit, allowing member of the co-operative to voice when another member does something they do not agree with. This is furthermore seen as helping in making mutual decisions that reflect what is best for all rather than for an individual, again, underlining the overall collective position people portray.

The advantage of being part of a co-operative or a similar mutual support group becomes even more apparent, when participants talk about potential activities, which extend beyond the immediate activities taking place in the community, for example to pressure government for better road access or improve their bargaining power when buying seeds. This suggests that being part of the co-operative makes people feel stronger by being a group of people.

This intrinsic community spirit reflects a point mentioned by Verma (2005b), who points out the strong community and democracy ethos of India, and how community-based organizations, such as co-operatives can promote sustainability, contribute to job creation and poverty alleviation. In this regard co-operatives

have a comparative advantage over other forms of business to promote sustainable development, as they are already embedded in the culture of rural India.

While perhaps not entirely accountable to the co-operative structure as such, some participants mention aspects that highlight the potential of the entire project to raise people's confidence and give them a sense of achievement. Whereas before the project had started, people felt unlucky to have been born in the area, the opposite is now true, according to one participant. This relates to an important benefit raised by Blackstock (2005), who questions how truly empowered a poor community can feel to avert the potentially negative impacts of tourism, especially when faced with outside competition. According to the participant mentioned above, it might be concluded, that co-operatives, have real potential to instil confidence in its members, which may not be possible without such mutual support structures. These are additional reasons why co-operatives can be of real advantage for local economic development strategies, as all of the above increase people's ability for self-help and ideally also empower marginalised and disadvantaged groups, such as women (Birchall 2005; FAO 2004; Green and Marcone 2010; Sati and Juyal 2008). A further advantage over other kind of development approaches is expressed by one participant when putting the IDF project into contrast to a similar project taking place in some of the villages. While there is clear benefit derived from either project, he points out the advantage of independent decision-making and taking ownership of these: *"With us, our decisions are ours."* (C24)

The incentive for one man in the community to join should receive special attention in this discussion. His main motivation to join was to meet foreigners, which, in his view had already been achieved by meeting the researcher. In informal conversation with the interpreter as well as with participant E10, however, it also emerged that he was from the scheduled caste[26] and hence, most members of the community would not enter his house or eat his food and he was

[26] Historically disadvantaged people recognised in the Constitution of India

not allowed to eat with the rest of the community.

This was already briefly touched upon in the discussion about the tourism potential in this context. If inclusion of minorities is an aim for development projects, as is the case with the IDF project, and which is also expressed as an important factor in improving rural livelihoods in the literature (AusAid 2000; Roesner 2000; Shah and Gupta 2000; Blackman et al. 2004; Hall, Kirkpatrick, and Mitchell 2005; Kayat 2008; Gopal, Varma and Gopinathan 2010; IFAD 2010; Hall, Roberts, and Mitchell 2012), measures would have to be in place to facilitate such inclusion. Co-operatives present a real opportunity for such members of the community, who may otherwise be excluded from community activities. This is because of the open-membership policy of co-operatives, which by definition gives marginalised and disadvantaged groups the chance to be part of its operations (Birchall 2005; FAO 2004; Green and Marcone 2010; Sati and Juyal 2008). A further advantage of a tourism co-operative is that tourists may be unaware of or indifferent to the different castes, again, presenting a unique opportunity for inclusion.

These various ways in which co-operatives promote mutual support, shared assets and shared knowledge is seen as more than just a benefit by the members, but as essential in order to be able to provide the various services to meet tourist needs, such as transport, cooking or tour guiding. This is a significant finding for this and perhaps other comparable contexts. Assuming that the host community is poor, in order to engage in tourism development, a business structure which promotes togetherness and sharing of skills, knowledge and assets is integral to the success of such an undergoing. This is also mentioned by IFAD (2010) as one of the key issues in regard to enabling people to participate in economic growth, improve people's confidence as well as minimize risks, and membership organisations receive special attention here. Similarly, Majee and Hoyt (2011) emphasize what was identified through the interviews – that co-operatives have unique advantage, as they help people work for communal as well as personal benefit and hence

collectively contribute towards the well-being of a community as a whole through shared internal resources as well as increasing access to external resources.

The key points made above are summarised below:

Motivations to join

- A perceived economic benefit is one of the main incentives, however motivations do not only relate to personal gain, but also to the benefit for the wider community.
- There is an implicit positive attitude towards working for mutual benefit. Hence, co-operative activities are suited to work within the natural support structures present in these rural villages.
- Taking part in the co-operative is perceived as low-in risk as individual investments are low.
- Many joined simply because others were joining.

Distinctive advantage of being part of the co-operative:

- It will strengthen the natural structure of people working together.
- Benefits would be shared between members of the co-operative, while also creating income opportunities for wider society.
- Knowledge and skills will be shared.
- The sense of togetherness will increase.
- People can rely on mutual support as well as mutual monitoring.
- Group power extends beyond the immediate co-operative activities, e.g. to pressure government for better road access or improve their bargaining power when buying seeds.
- It can raise people's confidence and give them a sense of achievement, which increases how truly empowered a poor community can feel to avert

the potentially negative impacts of tourism, especially when faced with outside competition as discussed by Blackstock (2005).

- Independent decision-making and taking ownership of actions.
- Potential to promote the inclusion of minorities.

Thus far, some of the specific motivators to join and the distinctive attributes associated with co-operative activities were explored. This mainly revealed a variety of potential benefits that could be derived from such a project. Revisiting Objective 3, it was established that tourism clearly has potential to improve the economic situation in the villages and create significant social benefits. At the same time, tourism may also cause socio-cultural difficulties. In this regard, it was argued that community involvement and mutual support structures in tourism can reduce the negative and improve the positive impacts tourism can create, through a more equal distribution of resources and shared knowledge. However, academic studies which offer practical ways in which such community participation could be promoted are scarce. The case for co-operatives as an effective approach towards empowering communities and engage them in activities for communal benefit was made above, for example through shared knowledge and shared assets. The discussion on overcoming some of the more pressing challenges continues below.

When looking at the threats outlined in Figure 5.1, almost all could be minimised through a co-operative approach to tourism development. 'Discontent in society', for instance, refers to members of the wider community feeling excluded from development or being suspicious towards new activities taking place in their village. Here, it was believed, that tourism could open up a wider market, and hence, the ripple-effect would benefit the whole community. Furthermore, communication would be made easier by being part of a group, who could inform other villagers together.

Potentially negative tourist behaviour also emerged as a threat. Again, as a group of people, it was perceived to be easier to come up with acceptable guidelines for tourists and to help each other out when dealing with them.

Imitating tourist behaviour is perhaps one threat, which would be more difficult to avert, as it would be naïve to think, that cultural infiltration could be avoided altogether. However, as above, by being a group of people with a common goal, finding acceptable ways of dealing with such issues would be facilitated more easily than it would be if managing these would be down to a few select individuals, who may not understand or appreciate the concerns of the community.

Even when looking at some of the external and infrastructural barriers to tourism development, the findings discussed above further underline the unique potential of co-operatives in this context. Being included in tourism development would present a major barrier for members of the schedule caste for instance, and may be difficult for other socially marginalised groups, such as women. Because of its open membership policy, co-operatives by definition enable all who want to be part of it as active participants. Furthermore, following an intrinsically democratic business structure, no member's voice is more important than any others, expressed in the 'one member, one vote' principle.

Furthermore, the participants feel that they may be able to pressure government for better road access as a group of people. Likewise, the major challenge of lack of sanitation will be more easily overcome by the participants in West Bengal by pooling their resources and efforts. Even seemingly small infrastructural challenges, such as the lack of basic commodities like bed linen can be addressed, by sharing resources and assets. These would also be articles the co-operative could jointly invest in, should they wish to do so.

Similarly, internal barriers, such as feelings of inferiority or a lack of skills appear to be addressed through the co-operative. The former may not be attributed to the co-operative in its entirety, however, the IDF project has instilled a sense of pride in some participants about where they live, their future prospects and also fostered proactive thinking in other areas of their lives. Increasing their bargaining power as a co-operative, when buying seeds for example, is one such example. In regard to lack of skills, again, the advantage of shared knowledge and shared skills may address many, but not all of these challenges. Participants talk about the different skills and resources needed to cater to tourists and that many of them can be found within the co-operative. However, the lack of English skills within the majority of participants will present an ongoing challenge.

A further point of discussion should be the fact that opportunity clearly played an important part in people's decision to join. The IDF project partners had sought out certain villages and individuals and some therefore joined mainly because others were joining, or because they were told to join by someone they trust. This may pose a challenge in the future, if members are not fully committed to the co-operatives, as discussed by Majee and Hoyt (2011), who point out that organizing a co-operative requires significant commitment. In the case of this project, some members may have joined "just to test the water" (Majee and Hoyt 2011, p.57) and are less motivated by a co-operative ideology than the prospects of job creation (Mellor, Stirling, and Hannah 1988). If members do not fully appreciate the commitment and effort it takes until a co-operative is operational, this could lead to impatience in those who are waiting for return on their investments and efforts, which Majee and Hoyt (2011) warn about. Impatience was already evident in some participants at the time of the interviews; however, this will be discussed in more depth in the next two sections.

5.4 Objective 4 – Practical Implications of a Co-operative Tourism Approach

To gain an understanding of the practical implications of a co-operative approach to tourism.

Based on the data derived from the interviews, a strong case for a co-operative approach to tourism was made above. However, some of the discussion remained largely theoretical, as no tourist activity had taken place at the time of data collection. By addressing Objective 4, the discussion now looks at the practical implications of a co-operative approach. Here, this research begins to venture into unchartered territory and leaves much of the academic boundaries within which comparisons would hold true behind.

This section first looks at the level of strategic thinking within the co-operatives, what kind of activities are taking place and what specific goals had been set. In addition, the role of the IDF project will be contextualised, in regard to its actual contribution, as well as the participant's expectations. This will allow this discussion to move towards a level of evaluation of the project and the concept of co-operative tourism in general. This will further help in filling the gaps in knowledge on the promotion of community-centric approaches to tourism development, and the concept of co-operative tourism, as highlighted for example by Timothy (1998), Hill (2000) Shah and Gupta (2000), Murphy and Price (2005), Verma (2005a), Salazar (2006), Okazaki (2008), Paramasvaran (2008), Hanqin, York and Kenny (2009).

Furthermore, specific expectations in the IDF project will be discussed, to which extent these expectations been met, which gaps remain and what conclusions can be drawn from both. This will highlight a variety of problems, pertaining to a co-operative approach to tourism in general and in the specific context of the IDF project.

Overall, this area of discussion highlighted a clear lack of strategic thinking within the majority of participants, who portrayed an attitude of 'waiting' for tourists, more information from the project partners or local leaders, and for someone to tell them what to do. Hence, a need for leadership was much expressed in regard to guidance from the project partners or those perceived to be figures of authority in the villages. Some meetings had taken place, but otherwise there was little evidence of activities happening on the ground.

This confirms some of the factors expressed by Armbruster (2007), who talks about endogenous challenges, such as a willingness among members for self-help, the ability among members for self-help or sustainable entrepreneurial focus, as well as sufficient governance structures. While enthusiasm is clearly present among the members and so is the willingness for self-help, there is a clear lack of determination, initiative or entrepreneurial focus.

In regard to sufficient governance and entrepreneurial focus, there was little evidence of organised attempts to do anything and goals remained vague, such as wanting to create additional income or regular business, increase their knowledge through interaction with tourists and others, again, just wanted to receive tourists, some simply to have met foreigners or to 'be known' as an area. However, as these goals are broad rather than specific, this limits how effective they are in developing a precise strategy.

Nonetheless, some participants had taken initiative and were working on fulfilling specific goals. Participants had thought about ways in which they can cater to tourists' needs, such as learning more about local fauna or places of interest, creating more shops, and of major importance in West Bengal, providing sanitation. Here, a target of three to six months was set in regard to installing sanitation. Aspects of hygiene were mentioned by one participant, who understood basic tourist expectations like clean bed linen. The researcher's own observations, however, revealed that more awareness training on this would be

needed, having received a clean sheet and pillow cover, but a dirty bed cover. This shows that perhaps training needs are greater than anticipated and more hands-on training than was provided in the IDF project workshops would be needed. Other aspects, for example how much to charge potential tourists per night, had not been decided on.

The main activities that were taking place were informing other villagers about the project to get more people to join, but also to reduce apprehensions among those in the community, who were not taking part in the project. This is an important step in building trust in each other, which is one of the three most important aspects in creating a successful co-operative, as Barke and Eden (2001) suggest. As shown above, the two other most important aspects mentioned by the same authors – to have clearly defined aims that are understood by everyone and a business plan which is in place – however, fall short of being met.

While the local coordinators had a more defined understanding about organisational structures, such as the roles of the board members, organisation of finances and so on, this was not the case for the majority of participants. This became apparent in the discussion on specific roles which members were planning to fulfil. A lack of strategic thinking was evident as most did not have a clear vision of how they would contribute. Participants were eager to help in whichever way possible, but again, lacked a sense of direction and clearly defined goals, once more adding to the evidence on an overall lack of clear vision.

While some had specific ideas to set up homestays, work as drivers or contributing in various other ways, overall ideas remained vague. Perhaps a degree of flexibility does not have to be seen as solely negative, and perhaps being completely clear about the different roles before tourist activity will become more tangible is not essential either. Still, taking into account the general lack of goals and strategy this adds to the feeling of dormancy.

The above aspects are likely to have implications in regard to the viability of a project of this nature and need to be highlighted as potentially serious challenges to creating a successfully operating co-operative. The question which remains unanswered is how a stronger sense of ownership and a more focused level of strategic thinking can be instilled in participants in this, and similar contexts. If a co-operative is built on the principles of self-help and empowerment, would it be appropriate to suggest that such determination should come from within the participants and within the co-operative? Or does the fact that these villages were approached by the project partners suggest, that additional support to encourage a stronger sense of strategy and initiative should have been facilitated? While these questions go beyond what the data collected for this research could answer, they will be revisited in Objective 5. At any rate, the co-operatives were established within the context of the IDF project and therefore it is important to investigate its specific and actual contribution, and also look at the expectations the members of the co-operatives placed in it. This will establish to which extent such rural tourism co-operatives are dependent on external support, what advantages or opportunities the IDF project created, but also where its shortcomings may lie.

The IDF project's emphasis was on self-help, hence aimed for locals to develop their own skills and to contribute substantial efforts. However, assistance was given to selected members of the co-operatives, such as the local coordinators, in terms of training on the web portal or cDMO, capacity building, basic training in health and safety and on tourist needs. These workshops ran under the slogan 'train the trainers' and those attending were then expected to teach others in the co-operative. Training took place on three separate occasions for the total duration of eight days. The members did not receive any direct funds or infrastructure development. A significant contribution the project made was the creation of the cDMO marketing portal, a website running under the name of 'Edge of India', to which members were expected to upload photos and information on their homestays or places of interest. Furthermore, through the website, potential

customers can send enquiries about booking a variety of tour packages. Taking into consideration that creating marketing linkages presents one of the biggest challenges for co-operatives in developing countries as discussed by Birchall and Simmons (2009) and Chakrabarty and Gosh (2009), for example, this is an essential and significant contribution. The management of the website was to be handed over to the local coordinators by the end of the IDF project; however, some ongoing support will be provided by Dunira Strategy.

With the exception of the local coordinators, when participants were asked broad questions about the IDF project, their answers portrayed limited or no understanding of the roles of the different project partners. This is important to acknowledge, as a better understanding may have led to more realistic expectations in their individual contribution. However, participant's attitudes were generally positive, who believed the project was trying to help the community. The arguably biggest contribution of the project, the web portal as a powerful marketing tool; however, did not seem to be well understood, or participants were unaware of this part of the project altogether. An advantage appeared to be that some of the project partners are foreigners, which, increased the trust people have in their sincerity, as opposed to Indian government projects, which are perceived to be corrupt. Views on the Indian country head YES BANK differed. Based on the perceptions of some, there was clear discontent about YES BANK's inaction, their unclear role in the project and problems when sending important paperwork.

This could suggest that either YES BANK is as inactive as these participants proclaim or that their role had not been communicated effectively to the members. It is harder to establish what this says about the transferability of these findings, as they are limited to a few isolated and specific experiences. However, in regard to this point, as well as other points made above, such as in regard to the web portal, the importance of stronger communication between the different project partners and those affected by such development projects should be highlighted as important and not sufficient in this specific case.

Interestingly, it was determined that being non-Indian may have more positive than negative connotations in the context of development projects, due to the mistrust in government projects. Nonetheless, in interviews and informal conversations, a few participants voiced the wish that training sessions should have been held by a native. Firstly, because similar expertise in the field exists, for example on tourist needs, but also to avoid the communication problems that were apparent throughout training.

Another important aspect of the project pertains to the lack of progress, which participants perceived to be the responsibility of the project managers. This means that people are worried and find it difficult to keep up their efforts as processes are perceived to be to slow and not frequent enough. One participant warns that if nothing happens within a year, people will look upon the IDF project as just another government project. Furthermore, one participant feels that the members have fulfilled their part – rooms are ready to accommodate guests, the web portal is up and running and they have received training – it is now up to the project manager to send tourists.

This last point was perhaps the most important aspect in regard to waiting for progress – the need to receive visitors. This emerged from interviews as well as through informal conversations. This was partly "*just to see we can get business"* (C27), but also to learn about any shortcomings and how to rectify them. To one participant, receiving tourists was seen to be of such importance, that he believed if they remain absent for much longer, the whole project could be at jeopardy.

While these are not encouraging views for the viability of the project, one positive outcome did emerge. Two participants believed that irrespective of the project outcome, working together collectively to sell produce, for example, would continue. This shows that besides the actual IDF project's aims, there are other

less intangible effects, as it generated debate on the benefits of working together.

Adding to the point on more extensive communication between the project partners and immediate stakeholders of the co-operatives, these findings imply that projects of this nature may need to take into account the impatience for people to see tangible change and progress and hence, managing expectations must be planned for. Furthermore, while self-help is at the heart of the co-operative principles, the need for more extensive training and on-going external support is repeatedly brought up by the participants, of whom one in particular points out that practical training had been given on the web portal, while other training remained only theoretical. Irrespective of this, work on the portal appeared to pose a real problem, for example in regard to writing in English.

This suggests a number of things: Given that the members are eager to improve their economic and social situation, and taking into consideration the clear enthusiasm portrayed towards tourism development and being part of this co-operative, perhaps the expectations put in the locals by the project partners were too high. Correspondingly, it may be true that the expectations put in the project partners by the participants went beyond their actual intended contribution. This suggests the need for more extensive communication at all levels of the project to clarify the specific contribution of the IDF project and manage participant's expectations accordingly. The time spent in the villages by the project partners was limited to approximately one week. While additional workshops were held with the local coordinators, these took place in larger cities, which were at least four hours away from the villages (one coordinator spent additional time in Delhi and one week in Scotland for training on the portal). The researcher felt that although the coordinators communicated their experiences with the other members of the co-operatives, that processes remained unclear to most participants.

Training needs were already discussed in Objective 2 and determined as a factor which can stop communities from actively taking part in development in peripheral areas (Blackman et al. 2004; Wilson et al. 2012). This is a risk for this project, as participants called for more extensive and hands-on training.

Also, the fact that many joined simply because others were joining was briefly touched upon in Objective 3. It was stressed, that this may not necessarily have to be seen as a negative. However, in review of the points made in this section it can be argued, that this may have had an impact on participants' understanding of their roles in the co-operative and on the extent they took ownership of their actions. Majee and Hoyt (2011) warn about members not fully appreciating the commitment and effort it takes until a co-operative is operational, which can lead to impatience in those who are waiting for return on their investments and efforts.

Recapitulating the discussion above, a strong case for tourism development in the context of the villages under investigation has been made and the significant benefit a co-operative approach can add to this has been established. However, when looking at the practical implications of this approach a number of shortcomings emerged when reviewing data gathered from the members of the co-operative:

- There was a clear lack of strategic thinking
- Goals remained vague, both in regard to long-term and short-term goals
- There was a lack of initiative to become active, expressed in the sense of 'waiting'
- The role of the project partners was not clear to the participants and disappointment in one of the partners was evident
- The role and power of the web portal was not well understood

- Participants felt they lacked skills in regard to language, working on the web portal and general hospitality training

Some conclusions can be drawn from this:

- More extensive communication on the roles of the different project partners is required in order to avoid misunderstandings and manage expectations
- The project partners need to develop more realistic expectations of people's capabilities, as well as a gaining a better understanding of training needs
- More support on language and other skill training needs to be facilitated

This could be facilitated if the project partners spent more time in the villages. Furthermore, more extensive, hands-on basic hospitality training, as well as more specialist training on the web portal needs to be provided. In addition, the challenge of language difficulties needs to be addressed and it should be ensured that the necessary steps have been taken in order to improve this.

These aspects, as well as the preceding discussion will be revisited in the next and final objective.

5.5 Objective 5 – The Overall Strengths and Weaknesses of a Co-operative Tourism Approach for a Framework towards Sustainable Development in Rural India

To outline the overall strengths and weaknesses of a co-operative tourism approach in the context of the IDF project, and consider its suitability for a framework towards sustainable development in rural India

This section brings the discussion on a co-operative approach to rural tourism development together and also acts as a conclusion to this chapter. In answering this final objective the aim of this research will be fulfilled. As implied in the description of Objective 5, this section will first discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a co-operative approach to tourism and finish with the assessment of whether or not such an approach is suitable in the context of rural development strategies in the villages under investigation and perhaps comparable areas in developing countries.

The areas discussed in this research suffer from extensive problems due to decreasing agricultural opportunities, rising unemployment and the resulting migration with devastating implications for the socio-economic situation of the communities. Opportunities for employment creation are limited for a variety of reasons, such as:

- A lack of general infrastructure (e.g. road access, education)
- A lack of markets in which to operate
- The challenge of creating ways in which these groups of people can be empowered and enabled to change their situation in an organised and sustainable manner

However, it was argued that tourism may present a viable opportunity in this regard. A clear advantage of a tourism approach is that is has the potential to create a new market for people to operate in, which has potential to improve the economic situation in the villages. It is also comparatively easy to set up and requires little initial investment. Consequently, it could bring significant social benefits, such as slowing down migration and creating a pull factor for the educated youth, who are looking for white-collar jobs. While not brought up specifically by the participants, it could also be argued that people already possess the most basic skills and assets required to accommodate guests, which in essence differ little from hosting and feeding family members. Furthermore, it was established that the most basic criteria for creating a tourism product – to have something to see; something to do; and something to buy (Taware 2008) – could easily be fulfilled in the areas in which the project is set.

At the same time, the host communities live in peripheral areas and have had little or no exposure to foreign visitors. Moreover, the structural constraints communities can face should not be underestimated, such as infrastructural challenges, planning issues, and a distinct lack of language skills. Therefore, an individual would be faced with significant barriers, most pressingly, infrastructural challenges such as road access and creating effective marketing channels (Chakrabarty and Gosh 2009). Furthermore, faced with more than a very small number of visitors and with a non-existent tourism infrastructure, an individual would most likely struggle to meet all the aspects needed to provide the services required by tourists, such as providing transport, food and some sort of entertainment.

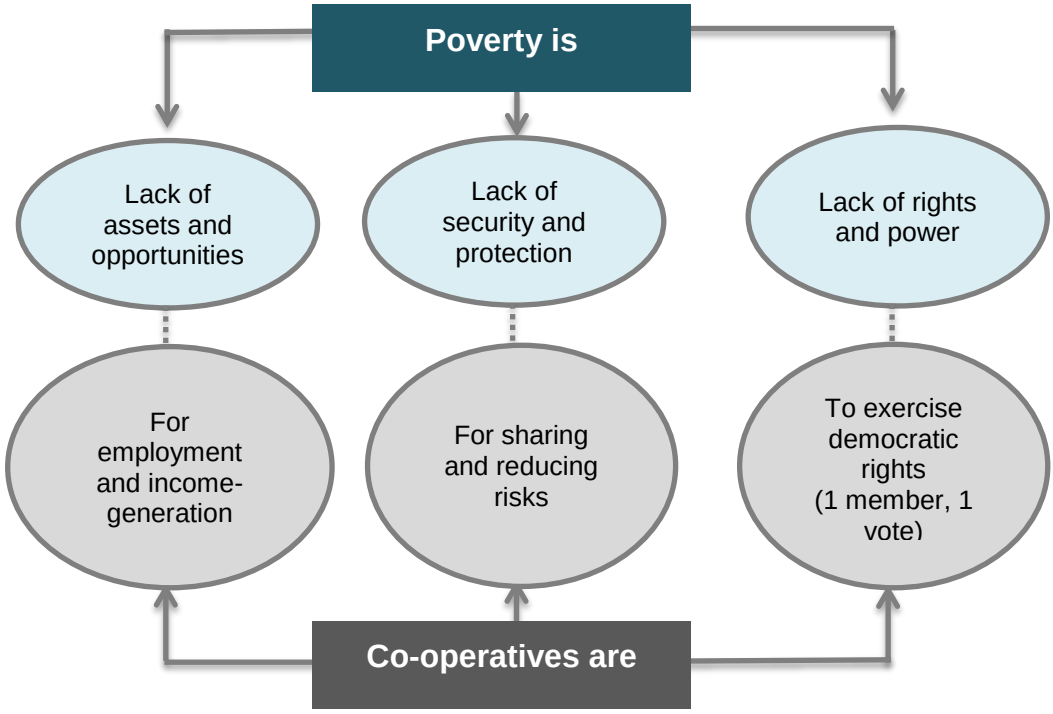
In addition, managing the potentially negative impacts of tourism, for instance sexual exploitation (Shah and Gupta 2000), staged athenticity and cultural distortion (Richards and Hall 2002), environmental degradation and economic leakages (inter alia Youell 1998; Swarbooke 1999; Richards and Hall 2002; Mbaiwa 2005; Murphy and Price 2005; UNEP and WTO 2005; Jayawardena et al.

2008; Verbeek and Mommaas 2008), as well as averting and over-dependency on tourism income (Pforr 2001) poses a serious threat to the host communities. As has been discussed before, there is reason to believe that the villages under investigation would indeed be vulnerable to these negative impacts and exploitation, as an awareness of these was limited.

For this and other reasons, it was argued that mutual support structures and a community-centric approach to tourism development would be necessary in this context. The co-operative business structure of mutual support and risk sharing was emphasised as a practical way of facilitating this.

Co-operatives are recognized by international agencies such as the UN and ILO as the kind of organization suitable to address all aspects of poverty. As previously referred to, Figure 5.2 by Polat (2005) shows effectively how co-operatives address some of the most pressing aspects of poverty.

Figure 5.2 – Co-operative Approach to Poverty



(Polat 2005)

Co-operatives are furthermore seen as an effective vehicle in rural development by bringing together a group of people who organise themselves to help each other for collective and individual benefit (Chakrabarty and Gosh 2009). By promoting mutual support and loyalty among members, it gives them the tools to help themselves and carry on with their activities once external support withdraws (ILO 2001; Birchall 2003).

The participants strongly echoed the benefits of being part of a co-operative:

- It will strengthen the natural structure of people working together.
- Benefits would be shared between members of the co-operative, while also creating income opportunities for wider society.

- Knowledge and skills will be shared.
- The sense of togetherness will increase.
- People can rely on mutual support as well as mutual monitoring.
- Group power extends beyond the immediate co-operative activities, e.g. to pressure government for better road access or improve their bargaining power when buying seeds.
- It can raise people's confidence and give them a sense of achievement, which increases how truly empowered a poor community can feel to avert the potentially negative impacts of tourism, especially when faced with outside competition as discussed by Blackstock (2005).
- Independent decision-making and taking ownership of actions.
- Potential to promote the inclusion of minorities.

One may consequently question why tourism should be promoted in this context, which could impose so many negative impacts on the community, rather than setting up agricultural co-operatives, for instance dairy co-operatives, which are already well known and established in India. The main problem with this is, however, the overall lack of access to markets in which a co-operative could operate. While there is a clear advantage to forming co-operatives in a variety of sectors, such as healthcare or improving buying power, these would not present solutions to the serious challenges the villages under investigation face, for example in regard to creating employment opportunities and keeping back the educated youth. Hence, the benefits of creating tourism co-operatives are threefold: Tourism can create a market within which co-operatives can operate, while the co-operative business structure can address and alleviate many of the problems potentially created through tourism, and at the same time allowing rural communities to effectively organise and empower themselves in the first place to provide a tourism product.

Figure 5.3 below shows more specifically at how this comparative advantage could work in practice.

Figure 5.3 – Co-operative advantage to tourism development

Threats and Barriers	Co-operative Answer	Explanation
Tourism Threats		
Discontent in society	Improved Communication Creating benefits for wider society	Benefits would be shared between members of the co-operative, while also creating income opportunities for wider society. Communication would be made easier by being part of a group, who could inform other villagers together.
Xenophobia	Improved Communication	Communication would be made easier by being part of a group, who could inform other villagers together.
Negative Tourist behaviours	Mutual Support	People can rely on mutual support as well as mutual monitoring. Boundaries can be agreed by the group in line with the views of the majority of people. As a group of people, it was perceived to be easier to come up with acceptable guidelines for tourists and to help each other out when dealing with them.
Cultural Infiltration		
External Barriers		
Planning Issues	Group power	Greater power to pressure government as a group of people.
Road access		
Sanitation	Group power	As a group easier access to

	Shared assets	government support is given. Financial resources are shared.
Basic commodities	Shared assets/ Pooled resources	Bed linen and other items can be shared and exchanged.
Social Structures (e.g. caste system)	Open-membership policy	Every member of the community has the chance to become an active participant.
Internal Barriers		
Lack of skills	Shared skills Shared knowledge	Within a group the pool of different skills becomes more diverse. Members can take on roles most suited to their skills.
Inferiority complex	Raised confidence Sense of empowerment	Being part of the co-operative can raise people's confidence and give them a sense of achievement.

This table shows the significant advantage a co-operative approach to rural tourism development could have in this context. However, one significant challenge remains unanswered and would be very difficult to establish by the local communities – the lack of marketing linkages, as already touched upon above. Furthermore, the lack of skills in several regards emerged as a challenge from the interviews. More limitations emerged in regard to the practical implications of the approach:

- Participants portrayed a clear lack of strategic thinking
- Goals remained vague, lacked a sense of direction and clearly defined roles
- There was a lack of initiative, expressed in the sense of 'waiting'

    - People were waiting for someone to tell them what to do
    - A need for leadership was evident
- There was little evidence of activities happening
- While enthusiasm and the willingness for self-help was clearly present among the members, there was a lack of determination, initiative or entrepreneurial focus

In this regard, the ability for self-help, which co-operatives promote, may be limited in this context, which infers that there still is a need for external support. This leads into the discussion on the specific contributions of the IDF project.

In theory, the project fulfilled the gaps, which members of the co-operatives would not have been able to provide themselves, especially in regard to setting up the cDMO and website to facilitate marketing linkages. For future projects of a similar nature it is therefore recommended to accommodate similar aspects, regarding training and the provision of marketing linkages into their planning. However, the following points and their implications should be reviewed:

- The role of the project partners was not clear to the participants and disappointment in one of the partners was evident
- The role and power of the web portal was not well understood
- Participants felt they lacked skills in regard to language, working on the web portal and general hospitality training
- Participants felt a strong need to be sent tourists in order to learn about their needs and identify potential shortcomings, but also for reassurance that they can get business

This last point was perhaps the most important aspect in regard to waiting for progress and this should be accounted for more strongly. While a powerful marketing tool was provided, the linkages with tour operatores were not

successfully established by the time of writing and participants were getting impatient. This emphasises the limits to self-help in this regard and highlights that a co-operative approach to sustainable rural tourism development is not viable without this external support.

Furthermore, the preceding discussion shows that awareness and skills training need to be greater than anticipated and more hands-on training than was provided in the IDF project workshops would be needed. While the local coordinators had received training on several occasions, they were not able to sufficiently communicate what they had learned to other members of the co-operative. It is hard to establish why this was the case, whether this was due to a lack of initiative or other issues. It could be argued that if a co-operative is truly built on the principles of self-help and empowerment, that such determination should come from within the participants. Nonetheless, it shows that a stronger sense of ownership and a more focused level of strategic thinking needs to be instilled in participants.

Furthermore, it is apparent that the expectations put in the locals by the project partners were too high and correspondingly, that while the participants were very enthusiastic about the project and eager to improve their economic and social situation, they were too reliant on the project's contribution.

The above aspects of course have implications in regard to the viability of a project of this nature: In essence, this research suggests that there is a great theoretical advantage to a co-operative approach to tourism development in rural areas in developing countries. However, this can only translate into practice if the major challenge of creating effective marketing linkages is overcome, most probably through external support.

Learning specifically from this project, it has become clear that there are limits to the participants' ability for self-help and therefore measures have to be put in place to overcome these. While these are speculations, it is possible that more time spent in the villages by the project partners could have alleviated some of these problems, which would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the villagers' capabilities and expectations and could perhaps have adjusted some of these. In addition, more extensive and ongoing support to facilitate training and marketing emerged as a priority from the interviews. Finally, providing effective marketing linkages can be considered a key deciding factor in assessing the viability of the approach.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6 Introduction

Chapter six will bring this research study to a close. It has now been confirmed that co-operatives can be an effective tool for sustainable rural development as expressed in academic literature. Empirical research has further reinforced this and established that it translates into a tourism context, arguably with comparative advantage over alternative business models or development approaches. However, a variety of problems with its practical implementation emerged. Each chapter of this thesis will now briefly be revisited, in order to underline how the respective sections contributed to developing, executing and analysing this research, which led to the above conclusion. Then, the main findings will be presented, followed by an outline of the research's original contribution and limitations.

6.1 Chapter Recap

Chapter one provided the background of the research problem, established the research context and outlined its significance to the debate on sustainable rural tourism development.

Chapter two provided a critical review of the topics forming the framework of this research. Here it was established that rural areas often fail to be integrated into development strategies and suffer most extensively from the multi-faceted effects of poverty (IFAD 2010; World Bank 2014). Focus was put on the Indian context, where 75% of the population living below the poverty line, live in rural areas (World Bank 2010), who are vastly dependent on agriculture and who suffer from high levels of poverty and unemployment (Government of India - Ministry of Rural Development 2014). It was also discussed that tourism is already strongly recognised as a significant contributor to social and economic benefit through employment creation and infrastructural development, especially in developing countries (Hall, Roberts and Mitchell 2012) and can therefore be considered a

viable tool in development strategies. Furthermore, developing countries are experiencing exponential growth in tourism and are expected to overtake developed economies in tourist arrivals by 2015 (UNWTO 2012), emphasizing the increasing interest in travel to such destinations. Subsequently, there is a lot of potential in tourism development. However, if not managed in a sustainable manner, it can have substantially negative impact on host communities. Pertaining to this, the literature review also determined an increasing focus on community-centric approaches as a key to sustainable tourism development, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder involvement in decision-making (inter alia Webber and Ison 1995; Taylor 1995; Marion 1996; Timothy 1998; Shah and Gupta 2000; Telfer 2000; Tosun 2000; Richards and Hall 2002; Bramwell and Lane 2003; Blackman et al. 2004; Blackstock 2005; Mbaiwa 2005; Byrd 2007; Kayat 2008; Okazaki 2008; Singh et al. 2009; Garvare and Johansson 2010; Koutra 2010; Torri 2010; Majee and Hoyt 2011; Stone and Stone 2011; Wilson et al. 2012).

With regard to this, it was proposed that co-operatives have great potential as a community-centric approach to development in this regard and to empower communities to take part in development, as stakeholder engagement and participation is an integral part of its operations. Therefore, it can strengthen community spirit and improve communication between different groups of people (ICA 2010), mobilise local resources for community development (Majee and Hoyt 2011) by combining finances and skills, and hence individuals reduce their risk by sharing it with others (Kalmi 2013). However, a clear lack of organised data in regard to tourism co-operatives emerged and overall, they seem to have been overlooked in the academic discourse on tourism as a development tool and the role co-operatives may play in this.

This lack of empirical research informed the subsequent chapter, which presented a discussion of methodological choices and identified appropriate methods to investigate the concept of tourism co-operatives further. The scarcity of information on the topic suggested an explorative approach as most suitable in

order to develop a foundation for theory. This research took the opportunity to look at a specific project, which aimed to set up a co-operative destination management organisation model in rural India. Therefore, it provided a unique opportunity to engage with stakeholders from the early implementation of such a project. Focus was put on the motivations of those involved in the project to join, as well as integrating the views of the wider community who may be affected by tourist activity in the area. An inductive, phenomenological approach was identified as an effective way of developing an understanding – *Verstehen* – of the experience of the participants (Schütz 1967) and to let the true meaning of the situation and how the participants interpret it emerge from this (Schütz 1967; Moran 2000). Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection, which gave the research the necessary flexibility, while also providing a degree of structure in order to cover the different aspects pertaining to the research problem.

The findings were presented in chapter four, which allowed the reader to gain an in-depth insight into the world of the participants and their interpretations of the co-operative tourism project. A rich description of the life of the participants in the respective villages was achieved, with its multi-faceted strengths and challenges. The need to diversify agricultural activities and create employment opportunities to counteract the vast migration away from the villages to the cities was strongly emphasized in this regard. These findings were then put into context in the subsequent discussion chapter by comparing and contrasting them to the relevant literature. A conclusion was reached in the discussion of Objective five within this chapter, which addressed the suitability of the approach for a framework towards sustainable rural development in developing countries.

This chapter will now recapitulate the key findings for theory and also address their practical implications. Then, the contributions made to knowledge will be highlighted. Some limitations to this study will also be examined and what can be learned from these for future research.

6.2 Main findings and Practical Implications

Co-operatives have been highlighted as a business model, which can put community-centric philosophies into practice and which furthermore incorporate not only various aspects of addressing poverty, but also appear to be ideally suited to the concept of sustainable tourism development, which embraces a community-centric philosophy and puts those affected by the challenges tourism may bring at the centre of its operations. Empirical research showed that co-operatives are a well-established business model in India, making it easier for participants to understand and utilise it for their benefit. This is a significant finding for this and comparable contexts. Co-operatives promote togetherness and sharing of skills, knowledge and assets, which strongly reflects the experience of the participants of this study. These attributes can be seen as integral to the success of sustainable rural tourism development. In these peripheral areas, mutual support is fundamental to the social structures and this is mirrored in the villages, where there is an implicit positive attitude towards working for mutual benefit and people portray collective positions. Hence, co-operative activities are well suited to work within and strengthen the natural support structures present in these rural villages, by improving communication, problem-solving and the sense of togetherness.

The distinctive advantage of creating tourism co-operatives begins with looking at alternative business opportunities, of which there is a clear lack of in the villages. For instance, agricultural co-operatives would struggle to find markets in which to sell their produce. With regard to this, tourism can create such an essential market within which co-operatives can operate, while the co-operative business structure can address and alleviate many of the problems potentially created through tourism. Furthermore, it allows these rural communities to effectively organise and empower themselves in the first place to provide a tourism product. Additionally, participants perceived working as a co-operative to be more than just of added benefit to the members, but as essential in order to be able to provide the various services needed to create a comprehensive tourism product. In contrast

to other tourism co-operatives identified in the literature (for example the Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative (AITC) or the Alleppey tourism development cooperative made up of house boat owners in Kerala, India), co-operative activities in the villages pertain to much more than just shared marketing activities, but to mutual support in a variety of ways, such as shared assets, shared knowledge and shared risks.

The benefits of co-operatives in this context are manifold, in parts suggested through academic literature, but more importantly, confirmed and expanded through empirical data, as they:

- Enable people to participate in economic growth by increasing people's confidence as well as minimize risks
- Help people work for communal as well as personal benefit and hence collectively contribute towards the well-being of a community as a whole through shared internal resources as well as increasing access to external resources
- Have potential to promote the inclusion of minorities
- Strengthen the natural village structure of people working together
- Promote assets being shared between members of the co-operative, while also creating income opportunities for wider society
- Promote mutual support as well as mutual monitoring.
- Promote independent decision-making and taking ownership of actions.
- Enable knowledge and skill sharing
- Increase the sense of togetherness
- Enable group power to extend beyond the immediate co-operative activities, e.g. to pressure government for better road access or improve their bargaining power when buying seeds.

However, the data revealed a number of problems when looking at the practical implications of a co-operative approach to tourism:

- Participants portrayed a clear lack of strategic thinking
- Goals remained vague
- There was a lack of initiative, expressed in the sense of 'waiting'
    - People were waiting for someone to tell them what to do
    - A need for leadership was evident
- The role of the project partners was not clear to the participants and disappointment in one of the partners was evident
- The role and power of the web portal was not well understood
- Participants felt they lacked skills in regard to language, working on the web portal and general hospitality training
- There was little evidence of activities happening
- While enthusiasm and the willingness for self-help was clearly present among the members, there was a lack of determination, initiative or entrepreneurial focus

In order to address these challenges it was proposed that more extensive communication on the roles of the different project partners would be required in order to avoid misunderstandings and manage participants' expectations. Furthermore, the project partners need to develop more realistic expectations of people's capabilities, as well as a gaining a better understanding of, and addressing, the various training needs, for example more extensive, basic and hands-on hospitality training, more specialist training on the web portal and language difficulties. It was speculated that more time spent in the villages by the project partners could facilitate this. In addition to this, it would have to be ensured that more efficient marketing linkages are established. In this regard, it was argued that the ability for self-help, which co-operatives promote, may be limited in this context, inferring a need for ongoing external support and measures, which would have to be put in place to overcome these.

Derived from the discussion above, it can be maintained that there is a great theoretical advantage to a co-operative approach to tourism development in rural areas in developing countries. However, this can only translate into practice if the major challenge of creating effective marketing linkages is overcome, which can be considered a key deciding factor in assessing the viability of the approach.

6.3 Original Contribution

Throughout this thesis the limited understanding of a co-operative approach to rural tourism development has been highlighted, which formed the main aim of this research. By answering this aim and developing the subject area on co-operatives in a tourism context, which to date has received little attention in academic literature, a significant contribution to knowledge has been made. It has also provided an insight into the concept of co-operative tourism in rural India, as experienced and interpreted by those involved and affected by it, through which it has added to the discourse on phenomenological research studies.

This research has contributed to theory in various ways and can be looked at from a variety of perspectives. It has achieved interdisciplinary relevance, by integrating theory on co-operative business with rural tourism development theory, as a community-centric approach to development. Helping rural areas around the world to find new and sustainable ways of improving their livelihoods is of major interest to researchers and governments alike. Increasing agricultural productivity is one desirable way of achieving this; however, this does not appear to be a viable solution to the areas under investigation and many rural communities around the world. Hence, this research has made a real contribution of outlining the theoretical potential of forming tourism co-operatives towards rural development, while also giving consideration to the practical implications of the approach.

Equally, this research has achieved cross-disciplinary relevance, by taking the principles on co-operatives and asking to which degree they may be suitable for adoption into a tourism context and vice versa. Hence, this research has innovatively broadened the boundaries of both. While tourism co-operatives already exist around the world, they are largely absent from any kind of organised academic attempt in recording and understanding them. This research contributes to building a foundation of knowledge in this regard.

As this research is set within a sustainable development context, a contribution has also been made to the broader theory on sustainable development approaches, and within this the discourse on rural tourism development and community-centric tourism research. Furthermore, a contribution has been made to co-operative studies in an innovative context. This research is therefore of relevance to a variety of literature and will further help in filling the gaps in knowledge on the promotion of community-centric approaches to tourism development, and the concept of co-operative tourism, as highlighted for example by Timothy (1998), Hill (2000) Shah and Gupta (2000), Murphy and Price (2005), Verma (2005a), Salazar (2006), Okazaki (2008), Paramasvaran (2008), Hanqin, York and Kenny (2009).

Beyond a contribution made to theory, this research also offers an insight into the practical application of a community-centric approach to tourism and has reached a tentative assessment towards its viability as a sustainable approach to rural tourism development. This should be of relevance to practitioners, government or non-governmental organisations, or destination managers in general who are interested in sustainable approaches to rural tourism development by considering the co-operative business model. Furthermore, those involved in promoting co-operatives in developing countries may be inspired to consider if and how tourism could fit in with their development objectives. This research describes the theoretical advantage of adopting a co-operative approach in depth, but furthermore contextualises it and clarifies practical consideration and challenges

when applied in the real world. By making these limitations in its practical implication transparent and explicit it allows for others to consider how they may be most sustainably addressed.

6.4 Limitations

All research will encounter some limitations. Those relating to this research will be reviewed here, and an assessment of their implications will also be made. Limitations for this research mainly relate to methodological issues. Furthermore, external limitations relating to the IDF project and beyond the control of the researcher will be highlighted, as they may prove useful to other researchers conducting field work in a similar context.

In regard to the interviews it must be questioned to which degree one can be certain that participants' answers reflect the truth rather than what they believe the researcher may want to hear. While looking at it intuitively from the researcher's perspective, this did not transpire to be as big a problem as anticipated. Participants appeared to be answering spontaneously and honestly. Furthermore, no contradictions or inconsistencies emerged during conversations, which could have hinted at participants giving answers which were not a reflection of their 'true' experience. Furthermore, the researcher can identify little incentive for the participants to give untruthful answers, as they had nothing to gain or to loose based on the results.

A further consideration in this regard must be the potential influence of the interpreters. While they were briefed on research ethics and the importance of truthfully translating what was said, the researcher cannot be completely sure that this was always the case, as she speaks neither Hindi, nor the local dialects Manbhumi in West Bengal and Kumaoni in Uttarakhand. The interpreters were however carefully selected with the help of the country manager and the local coordinators. Having spent several days with one of them and weeks with the

other, a level of mutual trust and respect was achieved. Furthermore, many of the participants portrayed some, if a very basic level of English. When the interpreters translated participants' answers, these often nodded or repeated words in English, therefore increasing the likelihood that answers were translated correctly. Naturally, there will always be some meaning that is lost in translation. This should not be considered a major limitation, as the research was more concerned about broader themes and ideas than linguistic detail. Understanding what was said was therefore of greater importance to how it was said. Ideally, the researcher should have been competent in the language that was spoken during the interviews to minimise any of these limitations occurring in the first place. However, this was not the reality of this specific research project.

For future research in a similar context the researcher suggests for the above limitations to be taken into account and think about ways in which these limitations could be addressed. The importance of retaining the exact words of what was said will depend on the research problem and questions and will further determine what measures have to be taken so this can be achieved to satisfaction. Back-translations by an independent interpreter for instance could have been utilised to confirm the data; however, due to cost- and time-restraints this was not a feasible option in this instance.

It can be argued that research taking place in peripheral areas of a developing country, with a culture different to the researcher's will likely create unforeseen challenges. For a novice researcher these were difficult to anticipate, as also previously addressed when discussing the interview environment. For future research in a similar context, the researcher would not only be able to address these issues prior to field work, but would also adopt a more flexible attitude from the beginning knowing that, in rural India at any rate, plans can change quickly and will most likely not turn out quite as planned. By being transparent about these limitations the researcher hopes to inspire others to do the same, so that as a

research community we can learn from each other and have realistic expectation in regard to setting achievable aims.

A further limitation to the research emerged as a result of the initially slow progress of the IDF project. On the second field trip, the researcher was expecting to interview members of the newly formed co-operatives, only to find out that they had not been formed yet and the people attending some preliminary workshops were not keen to sign up at this stage. The researcher therefore had to make significant changes to her research approach in order to make use of the time to the best of her abilities. Instead of interviewing members of the co-operatives, members of the wider community were interviewed to learn about their experiences of life in the villages, employment opportunities and create a basic discussion about the tourism potential in the areas under investigation. Furthermore, the researcher interviewed local academics and tourism professionals who had attended the workshops to gain a more comprehensive perspective of the topics under investigation. Hence, this initial problem turned out to be of real value to the research, as on the third and final field trip the co-operatives had finally been formed and the researcher was able to interview the members having already gained a good insight into the life situation of the villages. Then again, having interviewed these three different stakeholder groups produced a very large amount of data (approximately 85 interviews), which eventually became unmanageable. This led to the researcher having to cut down data substantially, exclude interviews and regain focus of the research, which was temporarily lost. This resulted in a lot time and efforts being wasted. While the progress of the project was beyond the researcher's control, the analysis of the data could have been planned better and it should have become clear earlier that too large an amount of in-depth qualitative data would not be manageable within the timeframe and scale of the PhD project. At the same time, this has been a most valuable lesson for a novice researcher, which will improve the way other research projects will be approached in the future. Furthermore, while the researcher decided to exclude interviews and data not helpful in answering the

research aim, all of this data was retained and is expected to be used for future analysis and publishing opportunities.

An additional limitation again relates to the IDF project. While this research must be viewed as separate to the IDF project, progress on the latter still had direct implications of what was achievable for this research project. As mentioned before, progress was slower than anticipated and hence, by the time of the interviews, and by the time the project had been handed over to the locals, no tourists had visited the villages. The findings therefore remain largely theoretical in regard to what could be learned about a co-operative approach to tourism. While this had little impact on some parts of the interview questions, for example on motivations to join and learning about the level of strategic thinking, it gave little insight to how a tourism co-operative would work in practice, what challenges they may face and if the principles of mutual support would continue to hold true.

6.5 Future Research

This study has made a contribution to theory, which can now be seen as a starting point upon which further studies can be based. Undoubtedly, the opportunities for this distinctively under-researched area are vast and could be approached from a multitude of perspectives. Future research could for instance look at the next stage in this particular co-operative tourism project or aim to identify others, either in villages in India or elsewhere in the world. Here it would be interesting to investigate how the findings from this study translate into different contexts.

The limitations indicated that this research project was not able to look at working tourism co-operatives that were actively engaging in tourism yet. As this study only looks at the early stages of setting up tourism co-operatives, vast opportunity exists for a form of evaluative research in the future. It would therefore be of great value to the research community to understand better how the largely theoretical

advantage of co-operative tourism would translate into practice and how the challenges identified in this research could be overcome.

Three existing frameworks were discussed in the literature review: Polat's Co-operative Approach to Poverty (2005); Woolcock and Narayan's Social Capital and Poverty Transition Model (2000) and Majee and Hoyt's adaptation of this model, Cooperatives and the Creation of Social Capital for Socio-Economic Enhancement (2011). Future research could be undertaken, which examines the relationship between these frameworks and the data presented in this thesis, for example, how the limits to self-help and the need for leadership identified in this research study may impact on existing theory.

Whereas the above frameworks emphasize the advantages of forming co-operatives in poor socio-economic contexts, the data presented in this thesis highlight shortcomings and gaps with its implementation in practice, at any rate in a tourism context. There is therefore significant potential for these frameworks, in particular those by Polat (2005) and Majee and Hoyt (2011) to be extended or adapted further.

From a methodological view, initially, the researcher wanted to adopt an Action Research approach for this research, as its democratic, emancipatory, participative nature reflected the principles of the co-operative itself so well. However, practical issues made this an unfeasible approach, as there were difficulties in the initial set-up of the project with changing participants and timelines, and hence would not have allowed the researcher to work through a common action research process. In hindsight, a purely phenomenological approach was perhaps the more suited methodology to establish this basic understanding of the concept and its practical implications in this particular context. However, Action Research could be considered by those embarking on further research on the topic and who are interested in addressing the practical challenges of development projects in collaboration with its immediate stakeholders.

6.6 Concluding Remarks

One of the opening statements of this thesis referred to the 1.22 billion people who live below the poverty line of $1.25 a day, mostly in rural areas of developing countries (World Bank 2014a), and that these rural areas must form an integral part of the discourse on sustainable development. Of course, this was a vastly broad way of looking at the problem and the research consequently developed a more specific and focused approach by looking at an innovative way of addressing the challenges rural communities face around the world through tourism co-operatives.

Finding ways in which rural communities can be empowered to be part of development and minimise their dependency on outsiders is an integral part of the debate on sustainable tourism. By exploring a co-operative approach to tourism in this context, this research has made a contribution to theory, while also looking at the applicability of the concept in the real world. In this, the aims and objectives of this research have been answered.

This research has broadened the existing knowledge on sustainable tourism development and the researcher hopes that it will generate interest in looking at new ways of addressing the challenges rural communities face in a more sustainable manner, which puts those affected by development in charge. Furthermore, the researcher hopes that this research will inspire future research on co-operatives and their application in a tourism context towards a more sustainable industry.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: QMU Involvement in Project

1.1 Scottish Government South Asia Development Programme Award

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/International-Relations/internationaldevelopment/idffundingguidance/southasiadevprog

1.2 QMU Press Release

Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Press release

QMU and Dunira Strategy help establish co-operative tourism project in rural India

Tourism specialists at Queen Margaret University have secured a Scottish Government grant to establish unique tourism co-operatives in rural India. The project will use Scottish expertise to deliver sustainable economic development in some of the most socially and economically disadvantaged communities in rural India.

Funded by the Scottish Government's International Development Fund, Queen Margaret University, the lead partner in this destination management project, will work in partnership with Dunira Strategy, the Edinburgh based tourism consultancy. The partnership aims to support communities in rural parts of India to embrace the concept of destination management and marketing, thereby encouraging tourists to visit beautiful and unspoilt developing areas, rather than continually gravitating to the better known larger 'honeypot' cities and resorts. The project responds to a need identified through Dunira's previous work with tourism destinations and co-

operatives in India.

Drawing on the social reformer, Robert Owen's development of co-operative principles at New Lanark, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Scotland's most popular tourism attractions, the project will equip local communities to realise the potential value of their natural and cultural heritage. It will also encourage them to use a co-operative destination management organisation (cDMO) to regenerate their communities and implement effective marketing strategies. The cDMO model will also benefit tourists who will be given new opportunities to explore less established rural destinations in India.

Professor Andy Frew from Queen Margaret University (QMU), a world expert in eTourism, explained: "If more parts of India are to benefit from the growth in global tourism, the whole country needs to embrace destination marketing and encourage tourists to travel to different and undiscovered rural settings. All too often, visitors to the country only experience the better known tourist areas and many rural communities just don't feature on the tourist trail. A co-operative approach not only makes a destination more attractive to visitors, but also ensures that the benefits are shared more equitably, resulting in more sustainable tourism."

Professor Frew continued: "Much of QMU's research focuses on creating sustainable business models. The concept behind this project will help to create a more sustainable future for India's tourism industry by spreading the economic benefits across the country and by encouraging rural agricultural economies to develop destination management organisations which will benefit their communities. This won't be something that is achieved overnight, but it's about building expertise for the future and exchanging skills."

The project also aims to address gender equality in rural areas - a particularly challenging issue. The partnership believes that as communities prepare to develop their areas as tourist destinations, it is an opportune time to encourage and equip women to grow as entrepreneurs within their communities.

Dunira's Benjamin Carey believes that the University and the Edinburgh-based consultancy are well equipped to deliver this challenging project. He said: "QMU's substantial expertise in international tourism and commitment to social enterprise projects, coupled with Dunira's expertise of establishing destination management systems in developing countries, ensures that the Scottish partnership is ideally suited to such an important and complex project."

The Scottish partnership will also work with YES BANK which will act as 'Country Manager' responsible for facilitating project delivery in India. YES BANK, through its Strategic Initiatives & Government Advisory (SIGA) Division, has been very active in multi-stakeholder development initiatives across India, with tourism as a priority sector. The Bank will advise on country dynamics, networks, introductions, project activities and logistics in the field. It will also work in partnership with QMU and Dunira to showcase the project outcomes and identify opportunities for replicating the model elsewhere in India and internationally, including taking it to the India Government for consideration as a part of national policy.

Fiona Hyslop, Minister for Culture and External Affairs said: "This project will help over 1,000 individuals in rural India fight their way out of poverty, including women and other marginalised groups. It will enable communities to capitalise on their cultural and natural heritage by creating tourism opportunities in order to achieve sustainable economic growth. Yes Bank and Queen Margaret University are committed to working together to improve rural development in India and increase financial inclusion for all and I wish them well with this excellent project."Benjamin Carey concluded: "This is an excellent example of a knowledge exchange project whereby a Scottish based partnership, building on the historic Scottish co-operative vision, can pool the expertise of both academic and business tourism specialists, international NGOs and a leading bank to improve communities and create sustainable economic benefits in an important developing country."

Funding for the project of £383,580 comes from the Scottish Government's International Development Fund (South Asia Development Programme) and will run over a period of two years and nine months.

http://www.qmu.ac.uk/marketing/press_releases/indiatourism.htm

Appendix 2: The Millenium Development Goals

Appendix 3: Photographs of Interview Environment

Photo 1 – Meeting participants while working in the field

Photo 2 – Interview at temple

Photo 4 – Interview during farm work

Photo 5 – The whole village turns up for an interview

Appendix 4: Participant Information

Participant ID	Location	Profession	Secondary jobs	Gender	Additional comments
Co-operative Members					
C1	WB	Agriculture		m	
C2	WB	Agriculture	Part-time Employed	m	
C3	WB	Agriculture		m	
C4	WB	Agriculture	Small business	m	
C5	WB	Agriculture (large scale)		m	Very highly regarded in community
C6	WB	Employed work		m	
C7-G	WB	Agriculture		m	
C8	WB	Agriculture	Other	m	
C9	UTT	Agriculture	Small business	m	
C10	UTT	Agriculture		f	
C11	UTT	Agriculture		f	
C12	UTT	Agriculture		f	
C13	UTT	Agriculture		m	

C14	UTT	Agriculture			
C15	UTT	Agriculture	Other	f	
C16	UTT	Small business owner		m	
C17	UTT	Agriculture	Small business		
C18-G	UTT	Agriculture			
C19	UTT	Student		m	
C20	UTT	Agriculture			
C21	UTT	Agriculture			
C22	UTT	Agriculture			
C23	x	x	x	x	
C24	UTT	Employed work			lives in Delhi or other larger city
C25	UTT	Employed work			lives in Delhi or other larger city
C26-G	UTT	Agriculture			
C27	UTT	Small business owner		M	
Experts					
E1	UTT	Academic		m	Haldwani
E2	UTT	Academic		m	Haldwani
E3	UTT	Academic (retired)		m	Ranikhet

		Kumaon University			
E4	UTT	Government - Director Ministry of Human Resources Development		m	Bageshwar
E5	UTT	Journalist		m	Bageshwar
E6	UTT	Contractor		m	Bageshwar
E7	UTT	Politician for current party (Kandahar constituency) and lawyer		m	Bageshwar
E8	UTT	Social Worker, Activist, Journalist		m	Bageshwar
E9	UTT	Project Director ULIPH		f	Pantnagar
E10	UTT	Consultant in travel		m	Pantnagar
E11	UTT	Academic (Prof.) Forest History Kumaon University		m	Pantnagar
E12	UTT	Principal ICM		m	Pantnagar
Local Wider Community					
L1	UTT	Teacher Himalayan School (small)		m	

L2	UTT	MD Hotel + several businesses		m	
L3	UTT	Sweet Shop and restaurant owner		m	
L4	UTT	Teacher (retired)		m	
L5	UTT	Temple Caretaker		m	
L6	UTT	Government employed teacher (retired)		m	
L7	UTT	Farmer/ Ex-army		m	
L8	UTT	Goldsmith in family business		m	
L9	UTT	Housekeeping in family homestay, farming, studying hospitality		f	
L10-G	UTT	Farmers		4f, 3m	7 (4f, 3m)

WB = West Bengal

UTT = Uttarakand

Appendix 5: Interview Questions Wider Community

Participant Number		Date/Time	
Location		Duration	
Language		Gender	

1 Introductory Questions

a. Tell me about yourself
b. What kind of work do you do?
c. What do you and your family members do for a living?
d. Have you always lived in this village?
e. Tell me about life in the village.
f. What is good about life here?
g. Are there difficulties with life here?
    i. How do you think things could be improved in the village?
h. What do you perceive to be strengths in the community?

2 Economic Situation

a. What is your main source of income?
b. What are the main jobs in the area?
c. Are you the main breadwinner?
d. Are there other incomes in the household?
e. How does income vary throughout the year?
f. Are there challenges for your business?
g. What is stopping you from raising your income?
h. In which ways would higher income benefit you?

3 Product Diversification

a. You said earlier the main jobs in the area are XXX. What other jobs could be carried out?
b. Do you think the area needs to diversify?
    i. In which ways could you diversify?
    ii. Do you want to diversify?

4 Tourism

a. Are you in any way engaged with tourists?
    i. What kind of tourism? International/ Domestic?
b. Does this have an impact on your income
c. Have you seen changes in the numbers of travellers in the last 5 yrs?
d. Do you know of tourism projects in the area?
    i. What are your views on them?
e. Do you think tourism should be developed in this area more?
f. Do you see tourism as a viable employment opportunity
    i. What are your needs in this regard?
    ii. What skills do you think you need to develop to benefit from tourism?
    iii. What skills do you already have that will be useful?
    iv. Specific training needs?
g. If you had the chance to take part in tourism activities here, would you be able to invest time?
h. Would you be happy to see an increase in tourism in the area?
i. Any worries?
    i. How could they be addressed?
j. What alternatives are there to tourism?
k. What do you think the area can offer tourists?
    i. Why do you think tourists would come here?
l. What kind of products or traditional activities could be of interest for tourists?
m. Can you tell me what good and maybe bad things tourism could bring?
n. Sometimes tourism can have a negative impact on an area, for example on the environment. How could this be avoided?
    i. Probe on how challenges can be addressed
    ii. What impact will tourism have on society?
    iii. What impact will tourism have on environment
    iv. What impact will tourism have on economy

5 Co-operative

a. Are you a member of a co-operative?
b. What are the benefits for you?
c. Are there aspects you don't like about it?
    i. How could it be done differently to suit you more?
d. Do you know what the co-operative principles are?
    i. SHOW THEM. Do they reflect what you think of co-operatives?
e. What do you think makes a co-operative different from other forms of business?
f. Do you think being part of a co-operative could benefit you
g. What would be the main benefits of a tourism co-operative be for you?
h. Do you think a tourism co-operative could help the community as a whole?
i. Who would benefit the most from co-operative tourism?
    i. Any specific group of people?
j. Which members in the community are most in need of help and how can they be included?

6 Resources

a. How are resources shared in the village?
b. Water, electricity?
    i. Are there any shortages of resources like water or electricity?

7 If it has not come up in conversation

a. Access to markets
    i. How would you market yourself?
b. Access to finance?
c. Skills development

8 Would you be interested in attending workshops to learn more about how you could benefit from tourism?

a. Would you like it if someone from outside the village to help with this?

Marital Status		How many people live in this house?		
Years of school?		Age Bracket	under 18	
			18-29	
Role in Project			30-49	
			50+	

Additional Notes:

Appendix 6: Interview Questions Co-operative Members

Participant Number		Date/Time	
Location		Duration	
Language		Gender	

(Introductory and tourism questions as with wider community)

1. Why are you taking part in this project?
2. What do you think the goal of the co-op is?
3. Can you tell me in your own words what the project is about?
    a. How do you interpret the role of the DMO?

4. Are you able to invest time in the tourism development
5. What is your short-term goal for this project?
6. What is your long-term goal for this development?
7. What is your role in the co-op?
8. Do you understand the role of the other members
9. Do you understand the role and purpose of the management?
10. Do you feel your views are being taken into account?
11. Do you feel like everyone's opinion counts?
12. Do you feel like you are encouraged to take part in decision-making?
13. Did the co-op develop any guidelines for tourism activities and how to manage its impact?
14. Do you share information with other members of the co-operative?
15. Do you give each other advice?
16. Does the co-operative have a clearly articulated mission statement?
    a. If not, what would you say is the main goal of the co-op?

17. Have any conflicts occurred as a direct consequence of the development?
    a. If yes, what happened and what was the outcome?
18. What is the economic impact of being part of the co-op?
    a. Are there costs associated with your co-op activities?
19. How would you describe your situation before you were part of the co-op and after you became a member?
    a. In which ways has life improved for you
    b. Has the way you view your community changed?

20. Are co-operatives different to any other kind of business?
21. Do you feel tourism has or will provide a good opportunity for employment in the community?
    a. Is there sufficient training?
        i. If not, what are your training needs
        ii. If yes, what kind of training have you received
22. How will you get tourists to come here?

Marital Status		How many people live in this house?		
Years of school?		Age Bracket	under 18	
			18-29	
Role in Project			30-49	
			50+	

Additional notes:

Appendix 7: Consent Form

Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Consent Form

The Development of a Theoretical Framework for a Co-operative Approach to Sustainable Rural Tourism Development in India

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this study.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage without giving any reason.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Signature of researcher:_____

Date: _____

Contact details of the researcher

Name of researcher: Cecilia Jean Teitz

Address: PhD Student, Tourism

School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Queen Margaret University Drive

Musselburgh

East Lothian EH21 6UU

Email / Telephone: cteitz@qmu.ac.uk/ 0131 474 0000

Appendix 8: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Cecilia Teitz and I am a postgraduate student from the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. As part of my degree course, I am undertaking a research project for my PhD thesis. The title of my project is:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR A CO-OPERATIVE APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

This study aims to develop a theoretical framework for a co-operative approach to sustainable rural tourism developments in India, and furthermore, to conceptualise co-operative tourism. For this an in-depth understanding of different factors affecting a co-operative tourism development in a rural setting need to be identified. More specifically, the research aims to determine the issues commonly faced by rural communities, their primary needs and issues and how these can be addressed in order to improve their livelihoods.

The findings of the project will be of great value to the researcher as well as the global community. Firstly, it will add to the debate on sustainable development through tourism and put forward an approach, the co-operative, that has been successful in addressing the socio-economic needs of rural communities, but that has not been sufficiently conceptualised for tourism yet. Secondly, this study has the potential to actively contribute to improving the livelihoods of rural communities and put forward a model that can be of practical use to many and be transferred to a variety of settings.

I am looking for volunteers to participate in the project. There are no criteria (e.g. gender, age, or health) for being included or excluded – everyone is welcome to take part, as long as they are part of the tourism co-operative.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview. The researcher is not aware of any risks associated with this interview. The whole procedure should take no longer than 60 minutes. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any stage and you would not have to give a reason.

All data will be anonymised as much as possible, but you may be identifiable from tape recordings of your voice. However, the researcher will take greatest care to ensure that only she has access to these recordings. Your name will be replaced with a participant number, and it will not be possible for you to be identified in any reporting of the data gathered.

The results may be published in a journal or presented at a conference as well as in the final thesis.

If you would like to contact an independent person, who knows about this project but is not involved in it, you are welcome to contact Claire Seaman. Her contact details are given below.

If you have read and understood this information sheet, any questions you had have been answered, and you would like to be a participant in the study, please now see the consent form.

Contact details of the researcher

Cecilia Jean Teitz - PhD Student,

Address: School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, EH21 6UU

Email / Telephone:cteitz@qmu.ac.uk / 0131 474 0000

Contact details of an independent person

Claire Seaman

Academic Director, Management and Enterprise

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School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management
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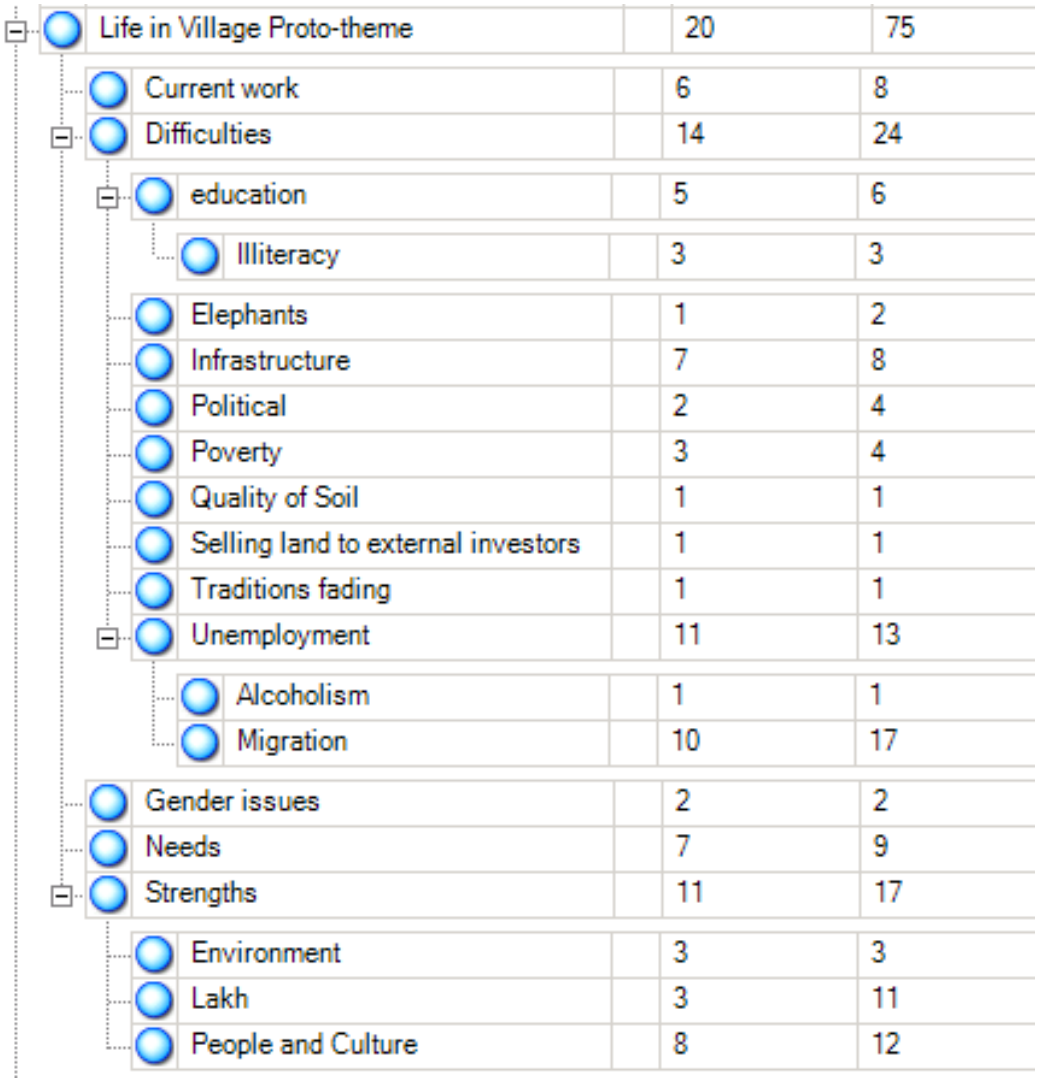
EH21 6UU
Tel: +44 (0)131 474 0000

Appendix 9: Codes For 'Village Life'



Life in Village Proto-theme	20	75
Current work	6	8
Difficulties	14	24
education	5	6
Illiteracy	3	3
Elephants	1	2
Infrastructure	7	8
Political	2	4
Poverty	3	4
Quality of Soil	1	1
Selling land to external investors	1	1
Traditions fading	1	1
Unemployment	11	13
Alcoholism	1	1
Migration	10	17
Gender issues	2	2
Needs	7	9
Strengths	11	17
Environment	3	3
Lakh	3	11
People and Culture	8	12